MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

JULY 2016, #398

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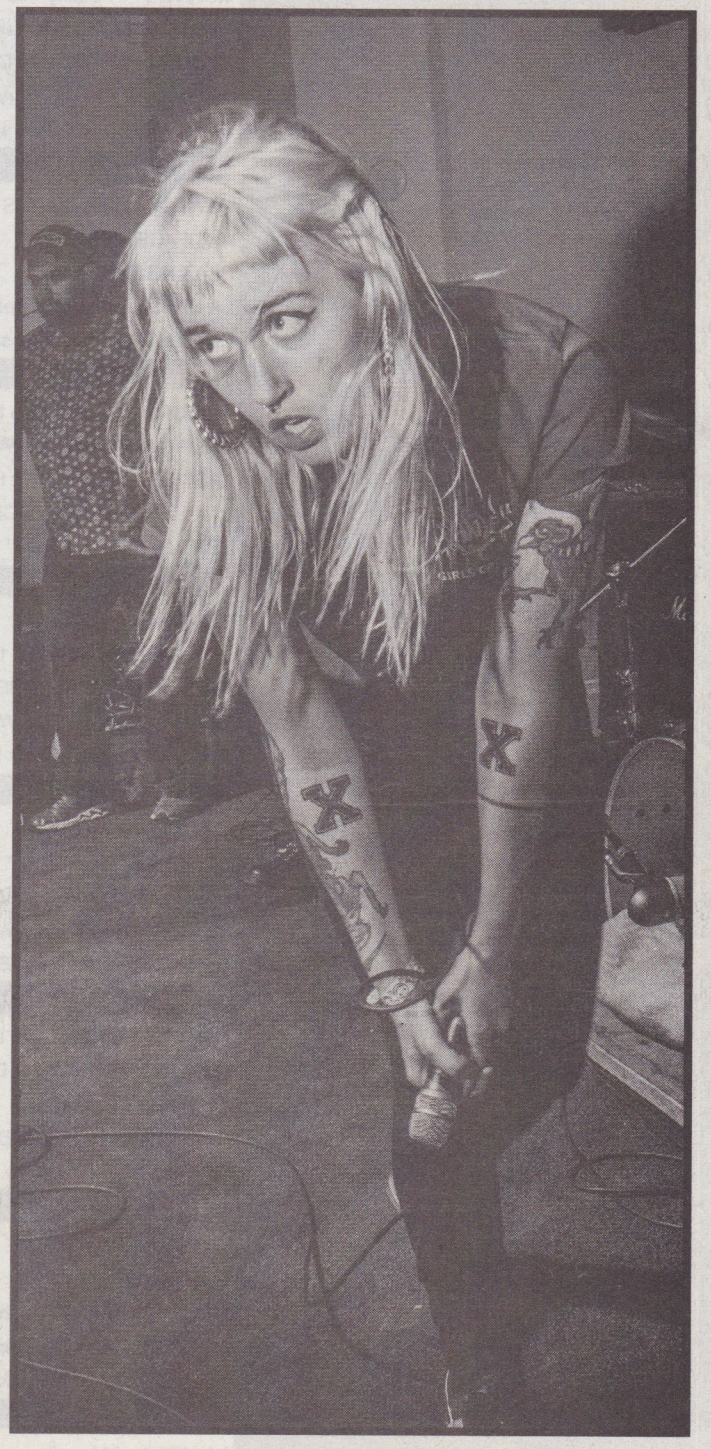

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

GRACE AMBROSE

- QUANGO – "Fatality" 12"
- THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi
- PUBLIC URINATION – I Don't EP
- Q – Hqw EP / RÜZ – Burying Stuff EP
- DEAD HERO / SECTA – split 12"
- PRISON MOAN – Parasite Hole EP
- LEMONADE – demo
- BETA BOYS – Real Rockers EP
- SCUMRAID – live
- YI – live

MATT BADENHOP

- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – live
- ANTIFACES – live
- BLAZING EYE – live
- LA URSS – Maravillas del Mundo LP
- DEAD HERO / SECTA – split 12"
- FIRING SQUAD – Endless Game EP
- PESSIMISTS – O Plano EP
- QUANGO – "Fatality" 12"
- RED SQUARES – "Modern Roll/Time Change"
- BRONCO-LIBRE / GEWALTBEREIT – split EP

WILL BLOMQUIST

- WARCRY – Needle Zero Drone II EP
- BRONCO-LIBRE / GEWALTBEREIT – split EP
- LAST CHAOS – Only Fit For Ghosts LP
- LA URSS – LP / SKIPLICKERS – D.E.A.F. EP
- TETSU-AREI – IV LP
- DEAD HERO / SECTA – split 12"
- PSYCHIC TEENS – Nerve LP
- FIRING SQUAD – Endless Game EP
- LOS MONJO / PMS84 / SCUMRAID – live
- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS / FRENZY – live

MITCH CARDWELL

- QUANGO – Fatality 12"
- SUN CHILDREN SUN – 12"
- RÜZ – Burying Stuff EP / BETA BOYS – Real Rockers EP
- GLAM FAIL – 45 / THE WORLD – flexi
- TWINKEYZ – Alpha Jerk LP
- CHRIS BELL – "America Now/Annie"
- CAL AND THE CALORIES – EP / BLACK PANTIES – EP
- PESSIMISTS – EP / ROUGH KIDS – "Lights Out" 45
- THE SLEEPING AIDES AND RAZORBLADES – 45
- VISITORS – Poet's End LP

ROBERT COLLINS

- THE DARK – live
- SCUMRAID – live
- ZERO – LP / FCKR – demo
- PESSIMISTS – EP and live
- BI-MARKS – If You Can't Swim, Drown 12"
- LAST CHAOS – Only Fit For Ghosts LP
- MUTANT ITCH – live / ICONOCLAST – live
- GENEX – demo / DARK ERA – LP
- SEM HASTRO – live / STRANGERS – live
- WARCRY – Needle Zero Drone II EP / OUTSKIRTS – demo

LAYLA GIBBON

- THE WORLD – flexi and live
- PUBLIC URINATION – I Don't EP
- QUANGO – Fatality 12"
- CAL AND THE CALORIES – Jackhamma EP
- GREYHOUSE – Dives to the Deep End 2xLP
- TWINKEYZ – Alpha Jerk LP
- PRIX – Historix CD
- CRAIG BELL – "America Now/Annie"
- CHARLES DU GOAL – Mobilisation/Resistance 2xLP
- CURLEE WURLEE – Birds and Bees LP

DAN GOETZ

- SKIPLICKERS – D.E.A.F. EP
- Q – Hqw EP
- VIOLENT ARREST – Authors of Our Own Demise EP
- LA URSS – Maravillas del Mundo LP
- BETA BOYS – Real Rockers EP
- DARK THOUGHTS – LP
- LAST CHAOS – Only Fit for Ghosts LP
- VAASKA – Futuro Primitivo EP
- FUCK YOU PAY ME / TO THE POINT – split EP
- THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi

GREG HARVESTER

- LA URSS – Maravillas del Mundo LP
- SCUMRAID – demo and live
- DARK THOUGHTS – LP
- MALA LECHE – demo
- DJ B.O. – demo
- BIZNAGA – Centro Dramático Nacional LP
- Q – Hqw EP
- RÜZ – Burying Stuff EP
- BAZZ / FRISBEE AND THE RAT PUNKS – demo CS
- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS / CINDERBLOCK – live

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TOP 10

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KENNY KAOS

- FLYING OVER – We Are Outsiders LP
- TOUGH SHITS – "Action Breeze / Adult Fantasy"
- SON OF A GUN – Co-Pay EP
- PLOW UNITED – Everything/'39 EP
- ROUGH KIDS – "Lights Out/The Shame, It Grows"
- DEVIOUS ONES – "Stylus To The Speaker" 45
- BRUISER QUEEN / THE GIRLS! – Split EP
- LA FLINGUE – Piss-Tape Zero-Quatre LP
- PSYCHIC TEENS – "End/TV" / RED SQUARES – 45
- TWINKEYZ – Alpha Jerk LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- V/A – Algo Salvaje Vol. 2 CD
- HEAVY TIMES – Black Sunglasses EP
- THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi
- CHARLES DE GOAL – Mobilisation/Resistance 2xLP
- LES SUZARDS – Sick Sick Sick EP
- CAL AND THE CALORIES – Jackhamma EP
- NOTHING OF MERIT – Well Oiled Machine 10"
- LA URSS – LP / BILL BONDSMEN – LP
- CHRIS BELL – "America Now" 45 / THE MONSTERS – CD
- KILLER KANE BAND – Mr. Cool EP / PRIX – Historix CD

RAY LUJAN

- CHARLES DU GOAL – Mobilisation/Resisitance 2xLP
- DARK THOUGHTS – LP
- THE FREEZE – Someone's Bleeding EP
- HEAVY TIMES – both EPs
- MEAN JEANS – Tight New Dimensions CD
- 1981 – Acts Of Aggression EP / PRIX – Historix CD
- SHATTERED FAITH – Volume III LP
- THE SLEEPING AIDES AND RAZORBLADES – 45
- TWINKEYZ – Alpha Jerk LP
- ANGELIC UPSTARTS – live / RED CITY RADIO – live

ROTTEN RON READY

- LA FLINGUE – Piss-Tape Zero-Quatre LP
- WARCRY – Needle Zero Drone II EP
- THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi
- FIRING SQUAD – Endless Game EP
- BLACK PANTIES – Everyone EP
- BETA BOYS – Real Rockers EP
- RECKLESS – Eldorado EP
- PUBLIC URINATION – I Don't EP
- EIGHTBALL – Daily Routine EP
- BI-MARKS – If You Can't Swim, Drown 12"

FRED SCHRUNK

- THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi
- PRISON MOAN – Parasite Hole EP
- PUBLIC URINATION – I Don't EP
- DEAD HERO / SECTA – split 12"
- Q – Hqw EP
- VAASKA – Futuro Primitivo EP
- SURFBORT – EP
- ROUGH KIDS – "Lights Out/The Shame, It Grows"
- BIZNAGA – Centro Dramático Nacional LP
- BLACK PANTIES – Everyone EP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

- STALLED MINDS – Underground EP
- DEAD HERO / SECTA – split 12"
- COCKPIT – LP
- LA URSS – Maravillas del Mundo LP
- V/A – Algo Salvaje Vol. 2 CD
- BI-MARKS – If You Can't Swim, Drown 12"
- QUANGO – Fatality 12"
- LOS MONJO – live
- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – live
- KAPITAL – live

ELI WALD

- LEMONADE – demo
- THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi
- SCUMRAID – live
- PRIX – Historix CD
- VISITORS – Poet's End LP
- QUANGO – Fatality 12"
- PUBLIC URINATION – I Don't EP / Q – Hqw EP
- PRISON MOAN – Parasite Hole EP
- TWINKEYZ – Alpha Jerk LP / ZOOM – LP
- LA URSS – Maravillas del Mundo LP

BRENDAN WELLS

- TWINKEYZ – Alpha Jerk LP
- DARK THOUGHTS – LP
- MADE IN JAPAN – 45 / KILLER KANE BAND – EP
- ZERO – LP
- WHIP – demo
- HEAVY TIMES – Black Sunglasses EP
- RÜZ – Burying Stuff EP
- PRISON MOAN – Parasite Hole EP
- LEMONADE – demo
- YI – live

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Lydia Athanasopoulou
Bryony Beynon
Erika Elizabeth
Lefty Hooligan
Al Quint
Viktor Vargyai
Fabiola Bazo
Tim 'Bev' Bevington
Alessia Dowhaniuk
Keir Gilchrist
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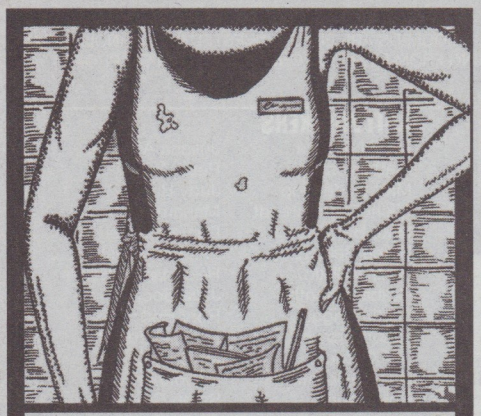

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I'M AN INTESTINE- OUT OF REACH 7"

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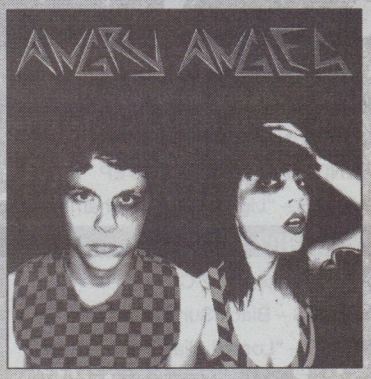

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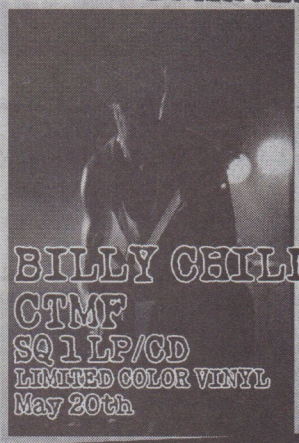

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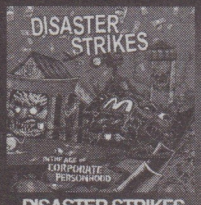

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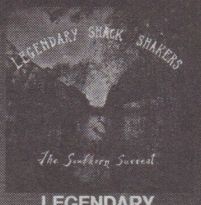

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Feral Ohms
I Fall / Sweetbreads - 7"
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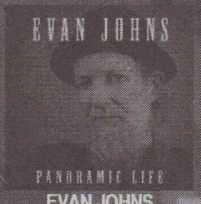

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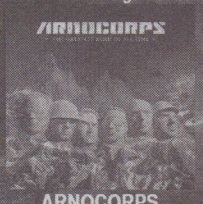

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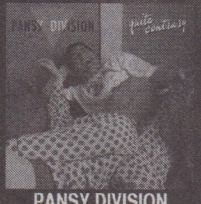

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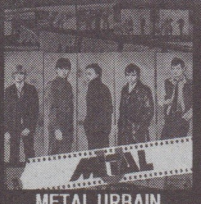

METAL URBAIN
Lady Coca Cola - 7"
re-issue of 1977 classic

MISCHIEF BREW
This Is Not For Children
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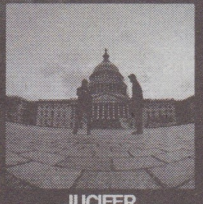

JUCIFER
District of Dystopia
Sludge metal legends!

LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

I'm an independent Swedish filmmaker who wants to come in contact with punk bands from Syria and Lebanon. Please email me: johnnybass4real@hotmail.com.

In May 2016, a call to boycott long-running Bay Area all-ages show space 924 Gilman Street was posted online. The club is well-known for many reasons, not least of which is its list of stated rules, painted at the front entrance: "No racism, no sexism, no homophobia, no drugs, no alchol, no violence." The grievances included in the call for a widespread boycott detail several alarming patterns at the club and offer insight into the systemic breakdowns that made them possible. The statement demands a boycott of the club until its membership and leadership take steps to hold themselves accountable to these rules. As of this writing, the text of the boycott is available online: boycott924gilmanstreet.tumblr.com.

Conversation around the boycott has been inescapable in the Bay Area punk community. What follows are some responses sent to MRR. *Our statement about the boycott and our participation in it can be found at the end of the letters section. This conversation is relevant to punks worldwide—not just those who may play or attend shows at 924 Gilman Street—who are interested in how/if insitutions should be held accountable or are curious about what an all-ages, DIY punk space should look like in the year 2016,*

In a rush to respond and weigh in on the recent allegations against 924 Gilman Street—an all ages, non-profit, volunteer-run punk venue in Berkeley, California—that were released online, many will start with their credentials, how long they've done this or that. In a lot of regards, it doesn't matter, and mine don't matter. What matters is what's happening now, today. And tomorrow.

924 Gilman is very open about the fact that it is all ages, about the fact that it is now officially non-profit, and that it is volunteer run. What you don't hear publicly is how it is run, and that creates a lot of confusion and misinformation. Does Gilman have a political agenda? Does Gilman vote Green Party? Of course not, non-profits aren't people, dummy. Is the process there democratic? Sure. Are they anarchists? Or maybe that's boring to you and you don't fucking give a shit. The thing is, Gilman is a reflection of it's current member base, and not just that, but a reflection of its members that show up to the membership meetings. These are held on the first and third Saturdays every month at 5 pm and are generally held in a round table type discussion.

What we do know is that there are many grievances which have been broadcast on social media as of late, and we don't know who the boycotters are because they remain anonymous. We know that they identify as past volunteers who tried to work within Gilman's current operating system towards what they see as positive and progressive social change and have reached a breaking point; they are done. While I personally agree with some of their points (not really so much on some others) and am pretty confused by the rest, I won't be paying for a show at Gilman or having my bands play there (which honestly won't be hard as I never much went there recently anyway) until I find out more and possibly try to change a few major issues that I have with Gilman from the inside. I mean, why not if it's important to me?

I would argue (and I like arguing) that attending a membership meeting to see for yourself what it is like, feel the presences in the room, and most of all listen—and even more so, listen to the opinions of the young show-goers. If you are conflicted, this is not an act of crossing a picket line. To those that have already given up, I invite you to come back to a meeting and see if comrades are there where they once were not, if critically-thinking colleagues and fellow punx are present, swallowing their pride and owning up to the shit pile that has been created in our own backyard. It will not be a clean and sterile effort, as it never is cleaning up a mess.

There are reports that the most recent membership meeting was of about 60–70, the highest in recent memory I'm told. The boycott, from what I can see and read, does not aim to close Gilman; it is merely a tactic to shed light on what the fuck is going on. And if you don't like what you see, fucking do something about it.

— Stevie Twits

Punk is not a safe space. It is particularly not a safe space for bigots, oppressors, racists, sexists, abusers, rapists, or anyone whose intolerance hurts members of our community.

I did not grow up going to Gilman or know about its importance in the Bay Area until after I moved here. I do know that the presence of all ages venues are severely lacking in the Bay Area. And it is a shame that one of the most historical all ages venues that was founded by the punk community and for the punk community is now endangered.

For those of you who don't know, Gilman has "rules" posted that were voted on by members of the Gilman community. Members that have volunteered their time to keep this club and punk alive in the Bay Area. These members should feel safe and the people who go there expect to feel somewhat safe because of these posted rules and Gilman's history. There are a lot of other clubs in the area that aren't being boycotted, like the Metro or Goldenbull, because no one expects to feel safe going there. Bands with shock value lyrics or actions that do not follow the Gilman guidelines are welcome to play at any one of the other clubs in the area.

Now is not the time to boycott 924 Gilman, but it is a time to get involved. *You* should show up to a meeting and *vote* to keep this venue safe and alive. You can even vote to 86 members or directly speak to them about these issues have been posted in the Boycott Gilman forum.

Support and *change* your community through actions. That is why I am going to continue to go to meetings to help ensure that 924 Gilman is a *safer* space for *all ages* punk. I will only boycott if there is no hope for change.

— Amanda
Inciting Incident

LETTERS

The Gilman boycott is so much more complicated than a "for or against" position could ever convey.

The Fang booking shouldn't even be up for a debate. Strangle your girlfriend? You should be facing a lot worse than a possible ban from a punk club. I don't give a fuck how long ago it happened or any talk of "recovery and redemption." You're done here, and everywhere else that values the lives of the people that drive it.

Murdering your girlfriend is perhaps the ultimate act of misogyny and there is no walking back into punk after the fact.

But this is inevitably what happens when you let decisions like this go to a goddamn vote. Voting is an inherently flawed process, particularly when it comes to addressing issues of safety and inclusion. Participating majorities are rarely going to be on the right side of any debate for protection of minorities. Any institution that concerns itself with minority issues faces this problem time and time again and invariably changes at a glacial pace, driven by processes outside of vote counting.

The call for a boycott is inherently weakened by conflating this very serious issue with other less important problems. It would serve us all to focus on the provable, dangerous behaviors being endorsed by letting someone with a history of violence towards women into the club. We all understand that there is a litany of issues that lead up to the boycott call, but by asking people to throw themselves behind all of it as a reason for walking away from Gilman, those asking for a boycott have essentially asked for 100% agreement with the ideals behind every complaint.

The overwhelming irony and lack of self-awareness in organizing a boycott citing "major label influence" through Facebook and Tumblr just makes my fucking head spin.

The fallout from all of these terrible decisions is plainly visible in the level of discourse over the boycott. Everyone is so busy trying to make everyone else look like an idiot that nobody is paying attention to the literal murderer on the doorstep. A boycott doesn't solve that problem nor does it address the systemic failures that brought us here.

–Anonymous

Jamie Holland was a recent co-head of sound at 924 Gilman Street:

Do I support the boycott of 924 Gilman Street?

It depends how support is defined.

I don't know if I'm going to resign my elected position at the club and a lot of other involvement with other areas where I try to make a lot of the things talked about in the boycott statement better.

After the volunteer meeting before the boycott, which according to the statement was the "last straw" that led to this happening, I couldn't imagine not quitting. I'd already quit two years ago over something mentioned in one of the statements. I've been back for about a year now.

As of this writing I honestly don't know. This is the biggest thing I've ever seen happen around Gilman and the comments have been such a mixture of supportive and cruel / divisive / threatening that I feel like I can't see more than a foot in front of my face with regards to the club's direction anymore. A lot of it will depend on Gilman membership's reaction to this issue and the community's continued reaction.

I told my co-head that I'm stepping away for now to think. For days or weeks maybe. If that means they need to vote to take my keys back, that's fair.

I didn't go to the volunteer meeting after the boycott hit. I'd heard from friends that a lot of angry people were rallying to be there and respond to the boycott and a lot of people who want change were staying away out of concern for possible violence, not so much during the meeting, but afterward or down the road. I regularly speak out against these issues already, and if I was the only one left raising my voice at the meeting I could easily be tagged as the "mastermind" behind the boycott. (I am not.)

So I don't know if I'm personally going to boycott.

The next question I guess is whether I support the boycott's right to exist and do I understand why it's happening.

Yes, I support that, complications and all, without a doubt.

The huge amount of attention the boycott has gotten, the depth of the many supportive comments and stories, the dripping, knuckle-dragging hatred of the opposing comments—this all shows that it's a conversation that needs to happen. It's probably way overdue.

[A couple of things were phrased differently than I would have put them. Obadiah is my co-head of sound, he's in Fang, he booked the show, and he's also a good friend. He might be the only person who has become a good friend of mine in the last couple of years who is a cis dude, so that means something (I hope I'm not forgetting someone because I'd feel like a complete asshole, but I've been sick for two weeks now and my head feels like it's stuffed with cotton).

I don't believe he's "clueless" or "inept." I think he comes from a different place and doesn't have the framework to see (*really* see) the people with complaints as whole people who are depending on Gilman to be what it claims. But we've had hours upon hours of conversations, we know how to listen to each other, and changing minds is not an overnight process. And that's more than I can say for a lot of other people in the club.

About the abuse issue in the details that basically calls out two people for some incredibly shitty behavior—some people seem to be trying to figure out "who is lying." I don't believe anyone is lying. I've talked to them all individually and I know them all.

Personally, I think the things that were being claimed were almost certainly said. The survivor has been through hell dealing with this issue over and over. The abuser is gone. I've seen what they go through every time it comes up again. They have no motivation to lie and make it a huge issue again.

I think those things were said, and I'd be willing to bet they were said out of the shock of being hit with the situation, trying to deal with it, and intending to help but not really knowing how. It goes back to the problem of a lot of people not having the experience to know specifically how to talk to survivors, how that's not made a significant part of the Gilman environment. So it sticks out in the survivor's mind like a memory of staring at the sun, but the person who said it has intense memories of just trying to help and that's it. That's my guess, based on knowing some of these people for years now. But I wasn't there. Repeat, I wasn't there. Others will have to sort that out.]

I've heard people say it's terrible to risk ruining a space that has meant so much to so many people, including me. I would not have transitioned when I did (I'm trans) without Gilman. I wouldn't have the social conscience that I do. It's just that those influences on me came from a tiny handful of incredibly unique people, most of whom are long gone along with so many other past volunteers who got burnt out because of reasons stated in the boycott.

Remember that Tim Yo closed the club after a year the first time because of burnout. Don't take anyone seriously who criticizes people for not having unlimited energy but don't show up themselves. Good times or bad times, burnout is the circle of life at Gilman.

I've heard that the punk community considers it bad form to criticize an all ages space. What? Why would *any* type of space be let off the hook of being asked to be better about addressing abuse and living up to its own standards? That's ridiculous. Gilman shouldn't care what happens outside the walls, even when it relates to physical or sexual abuse, racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, and the other things that are against the rules for important reasons? Give me a fucking break.

I see the boycott as an extreme response to an extreme situation, and it's legitimately scary, yet a small part of my mind is just detached and curious about what's going to happen because this is Brand New Territory.

***

See, for me, it all comes down to this:

Despite all the people who are telling the boycott, "You lost the vote about one band and you're a bunch of young crybaby PC whiners, back in my day rawr rawr punk rock rawr," that's not really the issue, at least for me. (By the way, I'm 40 and age/generation are somewhat related to these issues but they're far from being the whole story. Age might explain some people's lack of understanding, but it's absolutely no excuse for it.)

The issue is when people bring up issues of misogyny, ableism, racism, transphobia, and other types of systematic oppression that are clearly against the stated rules and what the club stands for, it is almost never "a discussion" like the anti-boycott side is saying it is.

Those folx virtually never say, "You know, you have a point. Can we ask you some questions about it so we understand what your experience and perspective are in a more complete way?"

That does not happen.

People respond with angry lectures that come down to how this stuff isn't a problem for them so it shouldn't be a problem for anyone else. They talk about how they did hard work to deal with those issues in their life so everyone else should magically arrive at that point of acceptance for terrible behavior as well right now—and make room for the exceptions to ethics that are being demanded.

Over and over they blame folx who bring complaints about these issues for having personal vendettas against people that the folx bringing the issues have never even met. They derail the real conversation and make it look like petty interpersonal infighting instead of several much bigger issues that affect an entire community. And things go nowhere.

So these discussions aren't happening at all in the way they've been painted. They're more like patterns in a relationship that's so dysfunctional that the people who are caught up in it can't even see it themselves and don't believe it when it's presented to them. That phenomenon has a name: cognitive dissonance.

I don't know what to do about it anymore. Nobody is perfect, Gilman has always had issues. There is *no such thing* as a "safe space"... see Concepts that are 20 Years Outdated.

That doesn't mean it's pointless to do the work and try—it's a reason to try even harder for as long as you can. But for years now I've seen other imperfect spaces locally and nationally leaving us in the dust with these issues, when Gilman was one of the main inspirations for them. That's sad, and that's a shame.

We're going to find out what 924 Gilman is really made of, what the community is made of, and I guess some of us will find out what we're made of. Fuck.

***

Update: the day after I submitted these thoughts I quit Gilman. I am now fully behind the boycott. Although there was a huge amount of support and a lot of people shared their own experiences with systematic oppression at Gilman and elsewhere, many current Gilman volunteers openly criticized the validity of the boycott without addressing the issues. Many others from all over made dozens to hundreds of threatening comments in the boycott's Facebook page.

On the night before I quit, a Gilman board/fundraising committee member posted among all of the shitty violent comments urging an audience of thousands to track down whoever started the page. She called the boycott a "first world problem", which she later backed off on with a vague follow up statement. She suggested a paranoid corporate conspiracy. She refused to reconsider the impact of her words among the violence when I asked her to privately. I quit immediately with no regrets since, feeling that stubborn ignorance is too entrenched at the club for me to have any significant effect on at this time.

I hope everyone will keep this conversation going wherever we can for as long as we can.

—Jamie (volunteer, head of sound, many other activities 2010-2014, 2015-2016)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL SUPPORTS THE BOYCOTT OF 924 GILMAN

Functionally, what does it mean for one institution to boycott another? In this case, it means that *MRR* will not enter into any partnerships with Gilman Street. We will not book shows there, we will not table at events there. We will not sell our magazine there, we will not send copies of it to the zine library. The club wants to reissue *Turn it Around*, a MRR Presents compilation, as a benefit. Our participation in the boycott means that we do not condone, nor support this release. Like Gilman Street, *MRR* is an institution made up of hundreds of people, each of whom will make their own choices on how to proceed. The below statement refers to the organization's position, which may or may not be supported by individual shitworkers.

Maximum's history is certainly linked with Gilman's—by all accounts there would be no club at all without the significant financial support offered by the magazine in its early years. However, the two have not been closely affiliated in decades.

As another long-running radical institution, we know well the challenges of staying true to core principles in a world that tempts you to do anything but. *MRR* has certainly changed shape in our nearly forty-year history, but it is our hope that we have not strayed from our founding values: supporting the needs of a vibrant, international DIY music scene, valuing intelligence and forward-thinking analysis in punk over reactionary and bigoted actions, and remaining wholly independent. The club's longevity should be commended and its supporters continually point to that fact. History, however, should provide 924 Gilman with the context and experiences necessary to hold itself to a higher standard. Instead, the club leans on its legacy in order to push an image of itself that is irreconcilable with the current reality.

We also know well the emotions that arise when defending an institution that many hold dear. When the magazine is faced with criticism from outside parties we have attempted to be open, humble, and willing to learn. The responses to the issues raised by the boycott we have witnessed from affiliates and representatives of 924 Gilman Street have been anything but. The conversation is littered with misogynist, transphobic, and homophobic epithets, threats of physical and sexual violence, and allusions to litigation. The first membership meeting following the start of boycott included a widely-supported motion to ban anyone *suspected* of being affiliated with the movement from the club. The de facto representatives of the club refuse to acknowledge that the claims made by the boycott warrant further investigation and have done nothing to quell the hateful and violent rhetoric from their supporters.

The clarion call trumpeted by so many at Gilman is, "If you don't like it, volunteer." It's hard to imagine volunteer efforts gaining any traction in a room full of people so unwilling to listen. *MRR* will participate in the boycott until and unless the club holds an open forum for community grievances outside of a standard membership meeting, until and unless the club employs a trained and impartial mediator to oversee membership meetings, until and unless the writing on the wall matches the conduct of the club.

It will take the above measures to convince us that there is an integrity at Gilman that is worth supporting, that there is indeed some kind of humanity that goes beyond political rhetoric, that is capable of recognizing destructive behavior, and that is not only willing to correct past abuses but wants to set the stage for future constructive communication and interplay. Without strong and sincere corrective measures from the people *already* participating in the running of the club, we will not be able to believe that 924 Gilman is a space interested in responding to the needs of the vibrant, DIY punk community and will not be able to offer it our support.

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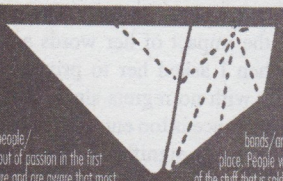

We like to meet people/ do what they do out of passion in the first underground culture and are aware that most that flag is total crap only made to make money. get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

bands/art/sport/etc. that place. People who believe in a of the stuff that is sold nowadays under And, if you feel you can write and relate,

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COLUMNS

I don't think I've ever had as many projects going on simultaneously as I did over the past month or so—I'm still sort of amazed that my head didn't end up falling off. Last month was busy with helping to get a radio station off the ground, but I've spent the better part of 2016 pulling together some writing for my friend Jay's *Dynamite Hemorrhage* fanzine, including an interview that I did with the killer early '80s Belgian femme-punk band UNIT 4, of whom there is a criminally small amount of information to be found. I feel like I say this almost every month, but seriously y'all, let this be a reminder that there are some amazing things that exist on the cultural margins waiting to be discovered and documented outside of the seemingly endless depths of the internet. At any rate, after my mid-April deadline, the copies of the finished zine finally turned up in the mail today, and I'm finishing this column right now, which (unbelievably) I just realized that I've been doing for a year as of last month, and it's all still sort of unreal to me as someone who very much does not self-identify as a "writer." I stumbled into writing in the same way that I stumbled into playing music: completely self-taught and self-conscious, with a ton of ideas that I'm not always entirely sure how to articulate clearly.

I've been playing in bands on and off (mostly off) for a few years now and I still flinch a little at the thought of calling myself a "musician," so it's just as unreal to me that I played not one but two really fun shows in not one but two different bands last month. My newest band, RASH DEEDS (formed in early February with three people who were complete strangers to me at the time!), played our first show a few weeks back with FOSTER BODY, who were here on tour from Salt Lake City and have a great new LP that I gushed about in these pages a few issues back. Our vocalist had never been in a band before and not only was it our band's first show, but it was her first show ever as a performer, and watching her go in the span of about two months from being so nervous and uncertain at our initial practices to completely dominating things in front of a crowd was totally fucking amazing and inspiring for me. Then the very next night, my band, DR. IDENTITY, played a show that I had set up for NEGATIVE SCANNER, who also have an amazing LP out, though not quite as new. They blew more than a few minds in the room, we bashed through a cover of my favorite URINALS song ("Scholastic Aptitude" forever), and apparently we got told that we sound like the WIPERS, which, founded or not, kind of feels to me like a Portland punk rite of passage or something.

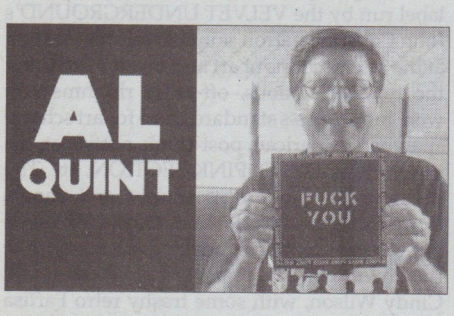
Anyway, April was a blur and I was too mentally scattered to really stay in the loop with new music for the most part, so I'm going to dig into the '79 to '82 post-punk archive a little bit here. The SUBURBAN WIVES CLUB were an all-female trio from the Philadelphia area (or southern New Jersey, to be exact) whose recorded output is limited to a two-song 1982 single with all of the scratchy, strangled guitar and bass-driven angularity that marked the early '80s NYC post-No Wave scene, despite a social and geographic distance from that community that might be best summed up by an interview given while the band was still active in which bassist Cherie Rumbol cites her love of Foreigner. Vocalist/guitarist Reesa Marchetti was literally a suburban wife, and the group generally found themselves on straightforward rock bills in less hip eastern seaboard cities, while still managing to completely nail the whole art-damaged, 99 Records/Manhattan dance club aesthetic associated with the likes of BUSH TETRAS and UT. The lyrics to B-side (should have been the A-side) "Guru Eye" were written from the domestically-frustrated perspective of Mao Tse-Tung's wife, as Reesa dryly sneers, *"I pick his socks off the floor / I bring him tea"* with the sort of sharp-witted feminist perspective that like-minded UK femme-punks such as the AU PAIRS and DELTA 5 had integrated into their similarly jagged yet danceable sound. Still sticking with the domestic theme, A-side (should have been the B-side) "Casual Cat at the Laundromat" details a laundry room flirtation, swapping most of the musical cues from Rough Trade's female faction for some New Wave-meets-garage grit with squealing '60s organ straight out of a HUMAN SWITCHBOARD record. Not a trace of Foreigner to be found, thankfully.

While the SUBURBAN WIVES CLUB might have sounded the part, MODEL CITIZENS actually were a product of the late '70s/early-'80s New York underground, centered around four core members who were painters and MFA students at Columbia, and who formed a band as their way of embracing the conceptual and performance art ideals that were blurring the lines between music-making and artistic practice as punk began to mutate into post-punk. Their recorded output is limited to one four-song single from 1979 on the Spy Records label run by the VELVET UNDERGROUND's John Cale (the patron saint of weirdos existing at the intersections of art and music), featuring the type of anxious, off-kilter rhythms that were more or less standard issue for art school-spawned American post-punk outfits at the time—think DEVO, PINK SECTION, etc. The delirious, near-wordless shrieks and shouts from Eugenie Diserio and Gloria Richards on "Animal Instincts" make them sound like the downtown evil twins of Kate Pierson and Cindy Wilson, with some trashy retro Farfisa stabs in the mix that only strengthening that B-52's parallel, while the tightly-wound, violin and marimba-accented minimalist groove and neurotically yelped vocals from one of their male counterparts on "I Am Honest" point to some shared DNA with the early TALKING HEADS, at least before the latter discovered Afrobeat and David Byrne got that big suit.

Cult Scottish post-punks VISITORS released one single each year from 1979 to 1981, then unceremoniously split up shortly after signing a deal with 4AD for a full-length album that never happened. Thanks to Toronto's Telephone Explosion label, those 7"s have just been reissued on a new anthology LP called *Poet's End*, along with four previously unreleased songs rescued from the same recording sessions (financed by John Peel!) that yielded the three EPs. "Electric Heat" from the first VISITORS single is rightly regarded as a UK DIY classic (it turned up late last year on that compilation LP of late '70s/early-'80s obscurities called *Cease and Desist*), charting the stylistic territory between the second and third WIRE albums with a clinical, paranoia-edged synth line that clashes beautifully with some monotonous punky bass rumble and half-shouted vocals. Some of the cutting room material here is actually just as good, if not better, than what originally made it to vinyl, especially the scrapped track

"Our Glass," which slowly unfolds over the course of five minutes with a minimalist, insistently repetitive bassline, sparse cling-clang guitar echo, and tensely-delivered lyrical polemics (*"words are failing," "ideas hold no meaning,"* etc.) that suggest a bleak grey monochrome rendering of GANG OF FOUR's spiky, agitated funk. A really well-deserved retrospective, and it's fascinating in a way to imagine the path that the band might have taken if they hadn't abandoned that potential 4AD affiliation, especially in an era when the label was still fostering a number of dark, gloomy post-punk groups before ultimately becoming synonymous with ethereal dream-pop. Could VISITORS have been as big as BAUHAUS, or would they have wound up being another IN CAMERA, unfairly lost in the shadow of JOY DIVISION? Does it really matter? (telephoneexplosion.com)

Say hey! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA, digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds: futuresandpasts.org



Never Mind The Politics, Here's The Punk

It's been awhile since I've done an all-review column so this is long overdue. So you won't find any discussion of Donald or Hillary or even Bernie in this column, although that could change next year when President Trump (arrrrghhh!!!) takes office. I imagine if the unthinkable happens, it could result in an era of angry political punk that rivals the Reagan years. Let's hope that doesn't happen. Angry punk, fine. Angry punk directed at a President Trump? Noooooo!!!!!

QUANGO's *Fatality* 12" has been logging a ton of turntable time. The story with QUANGO is it's a band with Richard from HYGIENE that started in 2012. There was a four-song demo, then three of the songs were pressed on a 7", and now there's this remastered 12" that restores the fourth song, "Viva Il Papa." I think that's the story. The version on this 12" is a different take from the demo. Whatever the case, the title track is a total earworm with the pealing guitar line à la BUZZCOCKS' "Breakdown" in the verses and an early JOY DIVISION riff in the chorus. They just sound old—and that's meant as a compliment. Old as in having a sepia-toned sound, something that could have come out back then. Punk and post-punk mixed together in glorious low fidelity that increases the bash factor. "Living In A Shithole" and "Quickquid" have a slightly more '77 punk feel, while "Viva Il Papa" (about Pope Adrian IV, the only British Pope) spreads out over four minutes at a sturdy pace, with a stinging guitar hook. (Danger, dangerrecords.bandcamp.com)

ADVLTS (yes, the spelling is correct) are a Baltimore band who have apparently revamped their lineup since their first EP, bringing in Mike Riley (PAPER DRAGONS, PULLING TEETH) on vocals and Brendan Bartow (FUSES—an unjustifiably overlooked band) on guitar. Driving punk but there's a nervy, semi-post-punk feel to it as well. Not just straight power chords, but an edgy jab in the guitar lines, along with a strong bass/drums tandem. The bass lines on "Fortune Teller" provide a strong thrust. The most straight-ahead rocker is opening track "Do The Adult," spitting out the facts of grown-up living—losing jobs, wives, kids, hair, teeth, and ultimately your mind. Not a bad soundtrack to listen to while a lot of that (or most of it) inevitably happens. (Toxic Pop, toxicpoprecords.com)

One new one and one old one from Feel It Records. The new one is the NASA SPACE UNIVERSE 12" swansong, *70 AD*. NASA SPACE UNIVERSE have never fit into any easy category. There's an abundance of speedy hardcore but they add edgier, nervier touches, mainly in the sputtery guitar playing, along with the nightmarish vocals. Some of the songs hit a punchier groove, especially "Building," "Infernal Recurrence," and the title track. They've certainly spent time listening to post-*Damaged* BLACK FLAG and early DIE KREUZEN, probably while reading books about both bio-devastation and devastation throughout history, as well. The production on this one is rougher than in their recent history and it ups the abrasiveness level. It isn't clearly stated in the lyrics (nothing is clearly stated—they tend to go for something more oblique) but 70 AD is the year the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, including the Temple. It does ask *"have things really changed? Has the world shifted?"* I suppose the answer to that would probably be no—same shit over and over again.

The old one from Feel It is actually an album of unreleased material by Virginia band the LANDORDS, *Fitzgerald's Paris*. Before they were the HAPPY FLOWERS, Mr. Anus and Mr. Horribly Charred Infant, AKA Charlie Kramer and John Beers, were two of the four LANDLORDS. They released one album called *Hey! It's A Teenage House Party!* in 1984 before Charlie and John ultimately decided to concentrate on the HAPPY FLOWERS, although it turns out they recorded LANDLORDS stuff after the first album (a bit of research reveals there was a 7" in 1987). Anyway, 30+ years later, there's this, consisting of sessions from 1986 and 1987, but not the songs from that second 7". The download includes another '85 session and live set from CBGB. LANDLORDS were ostensibly a hardcore band but worked in melodic touches and some metallic shredding (the liner notes claim an affinity for the TANKS album *Filth Hounds of Hades*). There are even a few abrasorock excursions for "Stigmata," "Press The Bar," and "The Strange House" that showed them moving into something a bit darker. Maybe not 100% essential, but still worth seeing the light of day. (Feel It, feelitrecords.bigcartel.com)

The latest batch of releases from Tankcrimes consists of new albums from VIVISICK (*Nuked Identiy*) and VICTIMS (*Sirens*), plus a pair of CD compilation reissues from SPAZZ (*Sweatin' To The Oldies* and *Sweatin' 3*). VIVISICK'S latest is one hell of a wild ride. After a high-energy gypsy music intro, the sound is spirited and aggressive. There are the traditional Burning Spirits trappings, but they also work in some hearty UK sing-along punk à la PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES to go along with Sunao's high-pitched yelp. Some great titles (I'd imagine the English translations are a bit loose)—"Why Must I Grab My Penis?" and "Peter Pan Syndrome Melancholy" come to mind. And the liner notes provide some inspiring reading. It's a statement about how even if punk can't change the world, it can make a positive personal impact. They also talk about having toured other countries and having their preconceived prejudices destroyed. Nuking identity—destroying the old one and finding something new. That burns mightily through VIVISICK's joyous musical expression.

VICTIMS are coming up on twenty years as a band and *Sirens*, their fifth album, is their first since 2011. Not much has changed. In the early days, VICTIMS offered up ANTI CIMEX-styled rage. Over the years, the sound got thicker and heavier while maintaining the speedy thrust, and *Sirens* continues in a similar vein. There are a few songs here that up the velowcity and trample over everything in its path—"Seven" and "Promises," the latter exuding *"Never give up, never give in."* Hope in a dreary world? Whatever the case, it's an anthemic ripper. Pro-forma Swedish crust-core but they've got it down at this point.

The SPAZZ discs offer up a total of 131 songs in a shade under two hours. Let's get rolling with a track-by-track breakdown. OK, maybe not. Anyway, these were both originally released on Slap-A-Ham, run by SPAZZ's Chris Dodge. Collections of 7"s, splits, compilation tracks, and some live recordings, as well. Anyone who's read this space for any length of time knows that I'm not a real aficionado of powerviolence, grindcore, what-have-you, but SPAZZ differentiated themselves by their ability to shift tempos effortlessly, going from blastbeats to more traditional thrash to crunchier stomp, sometimes in the same song. And it was done with a strong sense of wit i.e. they never seemed to take themselves all that seriously. You can tell these guys grew up absorbing the entire oeuvre of hardcore, from US, UK, and other overseas bands. Their various cover versions are brilliantly-executed, from SOA's "I Hate The Kids" to YOUTH OF TODAY's "Stabbed In The Back" (my favorite YOUTH OF TODAY cover ever, part of a trilogy of

New York Hardcore covers) to NEGATIVE APPROACH's "Lost Cause," with each musician getting a turn to add his own twist—there's even a funky break in it. All sorts of sound samples and there's even a fucking *banjo* on "Spudboy." I know a lot of people hate CDs but these collections justify the continued existence of the format. (Tankcrimes, tankcrimes.com)

TOTAL ABUSE are ten years into their career of ear-damaging hardcore, having started off as a more or less traditional-sounding unit but then they started expanding their sound into darker and abrasive realms. TOTAL ABUSE's output in recent years has been real hit and miss, but their latest, *Excluded*, marks a return to form. Heavy, barbed riffs are fused to explosive drumming, creating a sonic storm cloud and are paired with Rusty Kelley's anguished vocals. Needless to say, the sentiments expressed are born of pain—there ain't a whole lot of happiness in the outlook, the title track bearing that out. "Jealousy" states, at the output, *"I'm not a nice person / I don't claim to be / I have hate anger and jealousy /I fantasize about people under my boot / begging for release."* No, it's not poetry but it sure is succinct. Songs like "Eighteen" (not an ALICE COOPER cover) and "Jealousy" wield an unhinged ferocity, while the six minutes plus of "Watching The Paint Dry" shifts from a sturdy mid-tempo clip into creeping, meandering territory. Sure, they've learned a few lessons from BLACK FLAG and BL'AST, but there are worse influences and it still sounds fresh. (Deranged, derangedrecords.com)

I know Record Store Day is pretty much a ripoff—overpriced, unnecessary reissues, ones that clog the record pressing plants and cause huge backups, but the repress of METAL URBAIN's "Panik" 7" is an exception. METAL URBAIN were one of the first French punk bands and "Panik," recorded in 1977, is one of the all-time great songs from that period. Razor-sharp guitar, synth washes and mechanized drums and harsh vocals. This song also has one hell of a screaming guitar solo. The flipside, "Lady Coca Cola," is almost twice as long, repetitive and numbing but, once again, there's an ahead-of-its-time inventiveness. METAL URBAIN truly didn't sound like anyone else at that time and still sound fresh almost 40 years later. (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141, alternativetentacles.com)

In case you haven't been told (or weren't paying attention), SUNSHINE WARD includes three former members of BRAIN KILLER and they tear it up mightily on their debut 12" *Order* following a demo that was also pressed onto a 7". Following a well-worn path with a great amount of success, varying between hard charging, D-beat infused ragers and medium speed tempos. Jordan has an effective, throaty bray to go along with the band's high-powered flay. The musicianship is sharp throughout, from Ryan Taylor's rumbling bass to Kyle Folsom's powerful drumming to Jeff Poot's arsenal of power chords and singeing leads. (Feral Ward, feralward.com)

COMMANDO's demo, *Come Out Fighting*, is a dose of punchy, catchy rock'n'rollinpunk. Along the same lines as the MARKED MEN, although there's a tougher edge to it. It also doesn't hurt that Brandon Ferrell (DIRECT CONTROL, GOVERNMENT WARNING, etc.) is behind the drum kit, because he adds a huge kick to the proceedings. And since they're from Western New York, it makes sense they'd have an ode to Genesee. Maybe they'll have a track about buffalo wings on the next one. I'll be listening, either way. (More Power Tapes, PO Box 467, Buffalo, NY 14226, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

Finally, a tape, a 7", and an LP from three Toronto bands that I got at a show at the Boiler Room in Boston. On the cover of TRIAGE's *Power Beat* 7" it says, "fuck hardcore, this is power beat." When I saw them live, their vocalist Lia said they were youth crust. Their set featured the first drum solo I ever saw at the Boiler Room—which, sadly, is missing on this recording. Echo-laden vocals, metallic guitar leads popping up from time to time, and there's a slight hint of SACRILEGE in their sound. Label it however you want—it's just loud, fast, and banging. (Barfbag, faithvoidshop.com)

S.H.I.T.'s new three-song demo is called *i* because all three songs—"Introduction," "Incorporation," and "Information" start with the letter I. That's my guess and, being that I've been doing this writing s.h.i.t. (sorry) for a long time, I'm confident that's the case. I'm also confident in saying that this is another fine effort for this Toronto band. They've had a willingness to fuck with the crust/D-beat formula a bit, such as the introduction that's a fist-pumping rocker with wordless vocal effects. Then it's back to faster, head-fucking thump. (whatwedoissecrete.org)

VCR's first 12", *R.I.P. Sportsboy*, is a head-spinning garage sprint. Two of the people in TRIAGE also play in this band, albeit on different instruments, and it's quite a bit different. Whirling organ and playful percussion go along with the sarcastic sounding vocals from Sportsboy (aka Scott)—he could be LUMPY's Canadian cousin. Dare I say there's even a bit of soulfulness on the instrumental "Sportsboy 69"? And, after the opening track, "Murder City Rules," there are barely any gaps between songs except when you flip the record over. It's a wild, sometimes silly ride, even a blink-and-you-miss-it cover of the Bad Brains' "How Low Can A Punk Get?" or, more accurately, a snippet of the song. The line on "Shut Up" about pulling down ex-Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's pants, along with a zany sound effect, made me laugh out loud. I hope the title track, which ends the album, doesn't mean there won't be another VCR release because this one's a lot of fun. (Barfbag, faithvoidshop.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, sonicoverload.net, subvox.blogspot.com

Something's rotten in Denmark...and in England and Brazil and all over the world; especially places near me. Something stinks and gives off the pungent, heady musk of rotting fruit. Slaves cry out for water in the stinking hovels next to building sites in Dubai while the capos jack off to Czech porn on their Android phones...meth-addled white men load and reload magazines belonging to stolen guns they dream of using on the next motherfucker they see...

Christ, but I've known a lot of nuts in my time...some real cracked people with broken brains. Everyone knows someone that'd fit this description, and growing up I certainly encountered my fair share. But this madness that seems to infect people at random, well, it's growing and spreading and snaking into brains all over the world. Nice men and women who'd give you a smile and a pleasant word turn into blood-mad lunatics obsessed with death and dying. What could be the reason for this?

People I've known for years, nice and decent men and women, suddenly turn a corner and quickly walk down the stairs to the oubliette of the insane. I don't know why and there's no real use guessing. My own mother turned crazy and killed herself sometime in her late 40s.

At some points of this ugly little life I've led, I've been one of them. Wild-eyed, my thoughts fantastic and my actions careening from one extreme to the other...long nights spent huddled in the gutter or crying while I shit. Of course you're reading this right now and that proves I've recovered and am doing quite well for myself. That is decidedly not the case with a lot of people; they cling to weird views and stand firmly in the oily stew of their own monstrous, nonsense visions. I can't blame them! We're all of us afflicted with the same loneliness that comes from our alienation to our labor and our lives. More than ever we're forced to work for something that we'll never see, forced to attach ourselves to the hide of an economy that views us as bugs that alternatively provide nourishment if eaten or sick and vicious pleasure if stomped.

So we drift about, horny and insane...hungry for power that'll never even be close to manifesting itself anywhere near our reeking, revolting presence...

Then again, those who wield power seem even more susceptible to crazed actions and violent impulses. Think of Bill Clinton! He shoved a fucking cigar up a young woman's vagina. My

God! What sort of lunatic would do something like that? What the hell kind of psychotic spirit could possess the President of the United States to do something so ugly and odious?

But they're all like that... Terrible fat men condemning sodomy but fucking their sons and daughters with the sexual fury possessed by a certain breed of corpulent white. They keep themselves surrounded with hideous sycophants unconcerned with human life, with eyes like hateful laser beams that sear the flesh of the future and poison the possibilities of our fermentation in the gut of progress...

The whole world is ruled by deaf libertines obsessed with jacking off!

I think of them and my brain says: You're worms and cowards...you burrow in the dirt and if I slice you into bits then those bits become their own tiny worms and I know that the only way to annihilate you is by smashing you into mush and scattering your gray remains all across the corners of the planets...

Of course, I know what it is like to be caught up in a situational madness, I realize that things can get out of hand...but it is also true that I felt a hot, white shame whenever I acted, and I knew in my heart and even in my brain (or what parts of that useless, atrophied organ still functioned) that I was wrong wrong wrong...so why did I persist? Why did I keep going? I don't know—hell if I can tell you—but I did, I kept going like a true madman...

Does everyone feel this much shame? I spend my life covered in the stuff. I drip with it. It slips off my skin and infects everything I touch. But still I charge onwards, wrecking and wrecking and smashing to bits all the things that might have brought me joy. In that regard, I'm quite average!

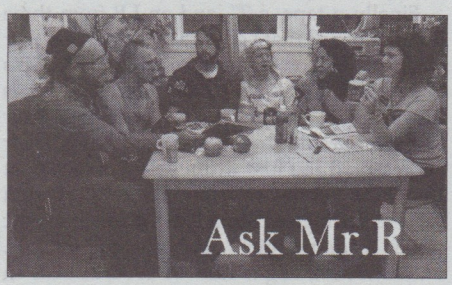
It's true, I've sat around my room—it's true—carving little X's into the top of my stash of bullets, making them into dum-dum rounds that can cause huge holes in a man when there might instead be a dime-sized wound...am I not insane when I do so? Is it not totally nuts to, on purpose and with a clear mind, spend your free time making the already vile reality of ammunition for a revolver into something even more hideous? My God!

I look out the onto the street and I see vicious little sex fiends looking to bite me like fleas and infect me with rots and diseases...if you're sick enough to look close, you can practically see the thick, viscous cum squirting out of their gaping pores...black holes with thin white worms poking out, squirming around and dying in the air. My milieu is just fat old women, drunk from slurping down jars of their own fermented piss, breath smelling like rotten garlic and a thousand burps...salami-eating fiends who sit on stoops and beat their children. Horny old lechers roaming the streets, led by their vile erections, bumbling into young girls and boys and whatever else they can frighten into a rape...These are my people! Whether I've sought them out or this is just all God's plan, this is the company I keep!

What the hell is a sane human being supposed to do, trapped and terrified amongst these piles of shit?

Surely I'm not the one to dole out any advice here. I'm as nuts or have been as nuts as most of these people...I've never clipped my toenails on the bus, but I have shot up meth mixed with Gatorade and slept in broom closets and screamed at nothing all alone.

It's no wonder people yearn for childhood...a time when we were whipped, beaten, driven insane, or rented out for cigarette money. It's no wonder that, when we finally realize that we'll never become young again, we go insane or we die.



I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an opinion *column though. (...and if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the "punks" and the "punx."")*

Text a question to 510-585-HELP or send a regular assed email to askmrr@mail.com. If you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!

There are always plenty of shows and things going on every weekend where I live, but I always find it extremely difficult to actually get out the door and go experience that stuff. I'm always so glad I left the house when I do, but the night always starts with me dreading going out. I am sure this is a bigger problem for people than ever with the advent of Netflix and shit. Any advice? Is there some special mindset?

P.S. You will pry my TV outta my cold dead (probably dead from obesity) hands, so you can skip that as an answer...

I know I've answered something close to this question before, but this is really such a nuanced situation for so many people, so let's talk about it again! For the *motivational* aspect of it, which it sounds like you're mainly wondering about, I wouldn't say there's necessarily a special mindset, but it can definitely help you get out if you either A) make a plan with a friend to go together so that you are less likely to flake, or B) tell yourself you don't have to stay out if you don't feel like it. You're allowed to just go to a show for ten minutes, decide you aren't having fun, and go home where you can watch *Columbo* in peace without worrying about what you're missing. Choose the thing that feels right for you. Sometimes you'll decide to stay out and sometimes you won't, but this will at least decrease the amount of "shouldas" you'll feel the next day, and will probably lead to experiencing a lot more good times.

We have these conversations and internal struggles so regularly, whether we're worried about the frequency in which we go to shows/parties/social gatherings, or when we're just worried about whether or not we are "doing enough" in general, like being in bands enough, making enough art, etc. We still try to participate in the culture of busy a lot of times more than what is actually helpful to us as people. There's a joke at the beginning of a *Seinfeld* episode, "Do you know what this is all about? Do you know why we're here? To be *out. This is out.*" If going to Jerry Seinfeld's stand up routine is being out, then I don't even know what I'm fighting for, you know? Sometimes it's just okay to stay home. We don't always have to push ourselves to be so motivated that we stop experiencing joy in what we are doing. We don't have to get mad at ourselves for watching Netflix or for choosing any other of a number of possible loner homebody activities. Sometimes those are acts of self-care we choose in order to keep ourselves from burning out so that we are able to stay punks for another thirty years.

There is definitely a difference between forcing yourself to go to a show/event because it'll be fun for you, because you want to be supportive of a band/scene, because maybe you even think Jerry Seinfeld will say something poignant, or whatever good reason there might be to push yourself to show up at something that you might not feel like attending, and forcing yourself to go out to a show/event you would rather not attend simply because you're experiencing scene guilt, feel as though you'll be judged for not attending, etc. The special mindset for that might be to remember that there is nothing at the top of the punk staircase. You don't have to climb that thing. Do what feels right for you and your mental state day to day.

On the flipside of that is a cool possible perspective changer that Grace wrote in her column from *MRR* #391: "There is radical potential in what we do...and most of it comes on a local level. We can use our love of loud noise and ~*sick riffs*~ as a framework on which to hang radical activity, use the ritual of the gig as an entry point for figuring out how we can actively resist the closing in of the city around us, harness the catalytic space-making potential of DIY and punk communities at a time when carving out physical space for ourselves is a radical and difficult task." It's obviously a quote taken out of context, but I love the idea of the ritual of show going as a way to facilitate other large and personally fulfilling situations, interests, and ideas *outside* of going to shows. Sometimes even when punk shows feel stifling, they're kinda the way out too.

I don't normally talk about personal stuff in this column, but my dad died this month and it's been horrible. Advice anyone? Text to 510-585-HELP. Send in email form to: askmrr@mail.com.

A lot fewer people read fanzines now but it hasn't stopped punks from making them, even if there aren't as many floating around as there were ten, twenty, thirty, etc. years ago. Most other zines are of the boutique variety; you see their prices range from anything from $5-20. Punk fanzines have so much effort put into them, yet the price is mostly always low, or as low as can be made without running into deficit. The same could be said about records as well, the expectation being that punks won't want to pay for anything more expensive, but I also think there's a sense of punks under-valuing themselves as well. They want people to buy it and to personally contribute to the scene, no one but punks are going to be interested in it, and all they want to do is share it with these other people and be a part of and contribute to the community. Maybe we forget that there are punks out there that have money, and if they want your product they will pay for it (up to a certain extent obviously). Where fanzines in the '70s and '80s sold for somewhere around 50 cents to a dollar and now we keep them at just under $5—if they were to follow the increased cost of living over time surely they should be selling for double that? Unfortunately (and I'm sure a lot of us can feel the pressure of it) rate of pay has definitely not increased at the same pace as the cost of living. What a scary time to be alive as the class divide seems to grow with the continuous boom in population. With these for the most part non-existent profit margins in punk product sales, the feeling looms that our ventures together and as individuals within the scene are definitely labors of love and largely thankless. And so after all that doom and gloom, this column is one for the people that persevere against the feeling that it's just easier to support the local scene by paying to get into a show, having a good mosh, buying some beers at the DIY venue's bar, and picking up some merch on the way out. Although there's nothing wrong with that! But here's a review of some recent punk fanzines—all very different from each other—that pressed on beyond the first issue. These reviews are of number twos (in the non-lavatory sense).

Cool Death Club #2: At first you'd think that this is nothing about the label at all. But this thick fanzine full of Go-Set newspaper clippings is everything that inspires the guys behind Cool Death Records as well as the music and culture emitted from the bands whose records they release and the scene around it. There's a record store whose slogan is "Looking forward to the past" (I'll send you a package if you know what store it is off the top of your head!) and this very much applies to this Melbourne label. Everything in the zine is neat to look at and the articles are interesting to read in order to understand a '60s–'70s era of rock culture in Australia. However, there is no original writing bar an intro.

Not For Everyone #2: A primarily hardcore and punk music fanzine out of Portland, OR, that incorporates a lot of skate culture. A fanzine "suited for those with thick skin…bad intentions and shitty attitudes." Opens with an intro and playlist of what he's listening to and recommends you should too. Interview with GENEX from Winnipeg, Canada (members of BORN BAD). It's interesting what you can get out of an interview if you ask the right questions and if people have something to say; *Not For Everyone* asking about their influences and the band being jaded on not having a sound people want to hear, commenting "HOAX is cool, but their aftermath ruined hardcore for a minute spawning 1,000 clone bands." It once again opens the can on "hype" bands/genres/scenes, their current contemporaries that are influenced by these but then other styles of punk that are dismissed or fly under the radar because it's not the flavor of the month. I found that comment interesting anyway, and it's a topic that can be discussed endlessly. I think it's hard being jaded on the world but being jaded on your own community is a beast. It's a good read for personal reflection though and in the end his intentions are positive. "Why can't we all just be inspired by whatever bullshit inspires us and go in different directions and keep things interesting instead of following the same trends down to mediocrity?" My answer to that: because people ultimately want to be liked by other people and instant gratification is easier in this day and age more so than ever. Punks will be human.

Sam writes great questions with thought and research behind them, introducing the band and quickly going deeper so you can really grasp their personalities and what they've come out of. There's a small article on HALF OFF and their 1987 release *The Truth* (off New Beginning Records) and small dissections of the songs on it. Lots of music reviews in which I very much enjoy his honestly and personal opinion about each release, not swayed by what's trending or other people's opinions of those bands. There's an interview with long time skater Bill Danforth who was involved in the '80s hardcore scene in Detroit but with skating being his real passion. It's a great read and I liked the journey Sam took us on, asking questions about the early days of skating and hardcore punk and onward, tracking his life around this. I found it particularly interesting seeing when skating started to get big and its crossover and intertwining with the hardcore punk scene from the mid-'70s and onward, later separating from each other around the mid-'90s. I used to skate a lot and looking at how far separated those scenes seem to be now with only remnants of each in the others scene, its fascinating to know the history of these two cultures together. There's a long fest review of last year's West Side Punks Connect Fest in Cleveland, then more reviews of punk fanzines and skate fanzines, keeping along the lines of a good honest opinion. He has focused pages of reviews of releases (mostly demos) showcasing the current scene of the city this fine rag came out of. Some cut-and-paste collage mumbo jumbo to boot and photo pages of all your current heartthrob bands. Your standard but well done cut-and-paste layout. An address is included for you to post your crappy demo to. All up, this zine is a banger and a recommended reading.

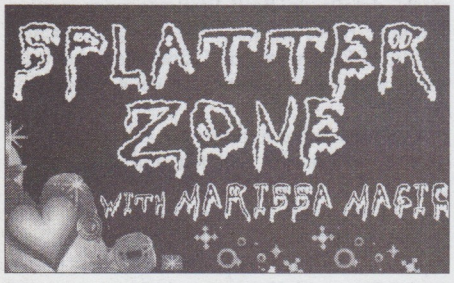
Teenage Fantasies #2: It's the return of my favorite and most likely the world's only contemporary power pop fanzine. Out of Australia, *Teenage Fantasies*! If Kate didn't interview bands like the #1S you'd probably think you'd stumbled across a gem from the '60s. All done on the typewriter, making her own ads, drawing pictures and obscure little clippings taken from fanzines or magazines from back in that golden era. The introduction takes more of a focus on the glam rock and glitter aspect or power pop. She covers her favorite records and bands like SHAKANE and a SLADE discography review, as mentioned an interview with one of the few awesome power pop bands of this day and age (the #1S). Greg Shaw's top 10 albums (as taken from *Bomp!*) and a big spread on the mid-'60s to mid-'70s pop scene in Cleveland, OH.

As the reader delves deeper into the fanzine they are clued into the weird and wonderful of the past; a short lived TV show done by Marc from T. REX right before he died in a car crash, details on Brett Smiley's porn career, breaking news on how the manager of the RASPBERRIES rejected Madonna's demo tape when she was a nobody, plus a whole lot more.

Kate shares her experiences of travelling to Ireland, where she had tea with Philomena Lynott (Phil Lynott of THIN LIZZY's mum) at her house, later getting drunk with Terri Hooley, the founder of Belfast's Good Vibrations Records shop and label—"If I never go drinking with Terri again it'll be too soon!" There's more content than can be mentioned but for the sake of convincing you to track down a copy, there's a contribution piece by Tia on LOADED DICE, top record picks by the RASPBERRIES, reviews of some old records, and star signs of your favorite power pop stars too. The first issue came with a banger mix tape and this one does the same. The last page has a track listing and one line description of what you've got to look forward to listening to. There's been lots of time and effort put into this fanzine overflowing with personality, from a time of the punk before proto-punk. Don't pass this one up

Surface Noises #2: Half size but packed full of content, this zine from Ukraine is by one of the biggest fans of punk I know, Roma, who runs the label Voice From Inside (for all your tape needs!). He writes in English and does a great job in accommodating us chumps of the prevailing tongue—his passion for punk music and culture shines through despite the language barrier. Cover art by Eugene Terry of Toxic State association. Almost entirely made up of interviews, the list covering Alexander Heir, ABSOLUT, EEL, KAFKA, MASSPOLLUTION, CRAZY SPIRIT, BORN / DEAD, RULETA RUSA, SAVAGEHEADS, HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS, LIFE CHAIN, POIKKEUS, EATER, and VAGINORS; Roma's ears are far-reaching. His questions cover the basic to the in-depth so you get to know all aspects of the band or person being interviewed and their music or contribution to the scene—as well as the person themselves. For as much as he's excited about the music, he's also happy to be meeting and talking to a person that expresses creativity in punk and so presumably has as much passion in it all as he does. I think this is also further appreciated knowing that Roma contributes so much to the international scene from Ukraine, a punk scene there that doesn't much share his passion for this particular punk music and scene, thus possibly a sense of isolation and reason to work harder to get involved. There are some reviews at the end, classic fanzine style. Art contributions for the front and back cover as well as within the zine. Check out his label and get in contact with this guy. He'll probably want to trade with you but you should totally support him with some coin if you can.

Got a punk fanzine? I'd be keen for more reads—let's trade. stitchesinmyheadfanzine@gmail.com



I think maybe at some point I had a reputation for trashing everything I got for review. Or, at the very least there have been multiple times where those who are in charge of assigning things have cornered me asking some form of "what do you like?" There have been lengthy times where it seemed like I got the dregs of we-don't-know-what-to-do-with-this or things that needed to be ripped to shreds. But here and there they read your mind and you get something killer. And then as with being a human who hangs out, you occasionally get a friend's record. I got a friend's band for review. I was telling Grace that the World EP sounded like the Police. I listened to it again and again, trying to escape my gut feeling. I didn't want to trash this record, but it felt inescapable. Is it my undeniable need to be honest? A pushback against being blindly supported? Am I just wrong?

"If you write that in the review, it's going to be like the time you said Weird TV sounded like Aerosmith."

In your existence of playing in bands and going to shows and drawing flyers and hanging around, you become friends with bands. So I knew Weird TV. They totally slayed every time I saw them, the demo lived in my tape deck for months. It seemed like everyone was really freaking over them. Their first and only 7" was coming, we were chomping at the bit. Can't wait, gonna be record of the year, yadda yadda. It was bad. But was it? Maybe it was too hyped? Maybe this was what it sounded like all along, am I just wrong? It's always strange to get a real deal thing from a band that you've drooled over for a while, flipping out at every show and blasting a demo tape forever.

The 7" was bad. Songs I loved, bad recording. Gutless and slick in a weird way that was not cool or interesting. In an attempt to conjure up snore fest stadium rock as a reference, I said it sounded like Aerosmith. It didn't actually; it was a feeling I was trying to evoke. I thought about just bullshitting and saying it was good, but it just seemed so condescending to do so.

MRR exists as an international fanzine and holds an aura of influence, but is it influential? More often than not I wonder if I'm speaking into a void. Or I'll be honest in a review and rip something apart and comfort myself in the thought that it doesn't really matter anyway, neither I nor this magazine is actually influential, nobody cares, apathy rules, etc. I'm attempting to place *MRR* reviews into the scope of the universe.

I can understand being bummed about a bad review. Art tends to be personal. You put time into this thing that you think is wonderful and cool and then send it off to something you think is wonderful and cool (I think) and then they don't think it's wonderful and cool. I'm speaking from a weird place. I can't really remember any bad reviews I've gotten except for all of my forays into improv noise but, really that is built to be anti-social. I've been trying to figure out how to say something sucks without implying that the entity that made it or that the fans that dig it are wrong. Don't know if I know / will ever know. But I think it's important to at least try to explain why something doesn't tickle your fancy. Building up a cultural of blind cheering on is ultimately destructive and really it's disrespectful in a lot of ways. Saying "this is great!" to everything allows for people to not bother pushing themselves harder or trying new things, it makes you a bad person for not liking something (and further, for having an opinion). It seems complacent to me to bullshit positivity about something you were asked your opinion about just because you know someone. Do they want that? I don't want that. I believe in not being mean and not making people feel bad, but making critique into this awful thing that only fucked up people do takes away a chance to figure out how to express opinions in new ways and constructive ways and maybe point something out that the artist didn't think of or didn't see or just dragging it into a new context. If there was more space to view critique as valuable and supportive, we could get better at saying shit in the best ways. I try to be softer, or not blindly harsh. I'm getting older and less obnoxious (I think). Or maybe just trying to be more articulate, really explain out why something is not so great, tease out the specific spots of bullshit. When you hold support and critique as opposites you end up calling someone a bad feminist if they aren't a fan of every band with women and it just really doesn't make sense, it's silencing. It's a larger way of telling people what to do. When I say I don't like something it's not like "Yo, band, can you change your music so I enjoy it?" It's just an opinion. But telling someone they shouldn't express their opinion because it makes them bad / wrong is just fucked up. The only reason my opinion seems to matter is because I blab it on a public forum, but in the end it's just my opinion.

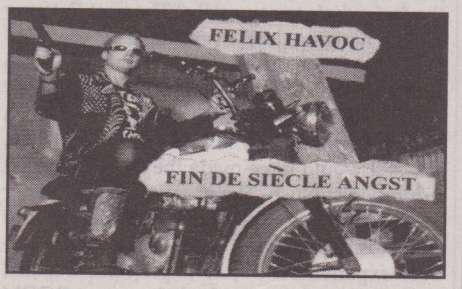
I'm an idiot and was a little tipsy in a backyard and blabbed to a member of the World (post-writing but pre-publishing) that I had given them a somewhat bad review but then because I'm an idiot and would not stop talking I tried to say that maybe somebody in the band would dig the Police comparison. This is a thing to think about—some people dig bad reviews of their bands. Also there are adjectives and band comparisons that would bum me out that I'm sure others would be pumped about. So maybe someone is excited about the Police.

And I guess that's a thing too, you write a bad review about someone you know and you will run into them. Maybe you talk about it or maybe it's awkward or maybe no one cares. After the Weird TV review, I got a couple "I don't care, but..." from a few individuals with ties to the record. Once after I said that Gun Outfit's first 7" sounded like twee even though they ruled live I ran into Dylan and out of nowhere he blurted "We just recorded, it sounds really good! Really different!" Again, if making honest critique was not deemed unsupportive, none of this would be a thing. I wouldn't be feeling fucked up and anxious about not liking something. It is worthwhile to be honest. Honest but not mean (or at least an attempt?). Maybe an honest review poses an interesting challenge, triggers a revaluation, makes you realize that you don't fucking care what anyone thinks. I'm not aiming for anyone to change their ways, I'm just thinking out loud. I'm indulging. I'm just a boring guy who spends most of their time in their room and at the moment watching *TNG* and listening to free jazz. And once a month I go somewhere, listen to a few records, and then

stare at my navel, and now you read the end product.

Again, I get the myriad ways a bad review could be or is a total bummer. Each record has this one chance to get a good review from a single publication (kind of). What if your noise record ends up with the Discharge fan? What if I'm just really grumpy? What if you have a dumb band name and it just casts a nasty (not cool nasty) shadow over everything?

I don't know, is it in your favorite person's Top Ten?

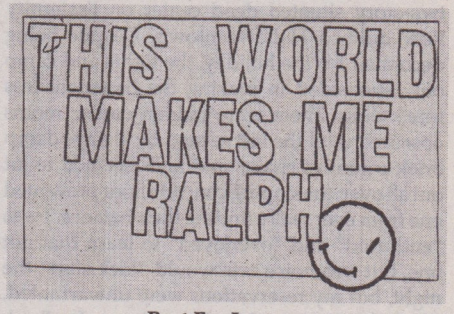


While it may not have been a very big deal in the rest of the world, the death of rock star Prince at the age of 57 has been a very big deal in Minnesota indeed. Prince's superstar status and the fact that he chose to remain in Minnesota and be part of the music scene here make him probably the best-known musician from this state. Unlike Bob Dylan, Bob Mould, and many others who left for New York or LA long ago, Prince stayed in Minnesota and contributed to the local music scene throughout his entire career. As a result, almost everyone in Minnesota has a Prince story, including myself. In the summer of 1988 I was hanging out Uptown when I saw a crowd of my friends watching a street performer play acoustic guitar. I could not understand why the punks were so interested in this busker. Then one of my friends pointed and said, "See the short guy in the trench coat with the hat pulled down over his eyes? That's Prince. He thinks this guy is really good and could be the next Dylan." I watched the busker do his set while Prince looked on. When he was done, Prince walked up and shook the guy's hand and spoke to him for a bit. While I have never paid much attention to Prince's music, I felt that if a superstar like him had time to listen to and complement a guy playing acoustic guitar on the street, he must be a pretty cool guy. My other connection to Prince is quite tangential. For several years Havoc Records was run out of a storefront on 35th Street in Minneapolis. In the '80s, that same storefront was occupied by a seamstress who made all the costumes for Sheila E. and much of Prince's wardrobe.

As I said, I'm not that into Prince's music. I'm really not that into Mozart or Beethoven either, but I have to admit that those guys had talent. Here is a guy who can sing, dance, play guitar, and writes all of his own music, with a career spanning 30 years. He was equally adept at funk, soul, jazz, pop, rock, and just a really talented composer and arranger. He was also very keen to recruit talent from the local music scene and spent a lot of time helping produce and launch the careers of many other Minnesota musicians. Although he was a big star in the '80s, he long ago told the music business to fuck off and started his own record label and production company with his own studio located outside of Minneapolis. At least around here, Prince is popular with people of all races, ages, and classes. On the day he died, something like 10,000 people flocked downtown for a spontaneous street party in his honor. Even in death, Prince's music has the power to bring together people who ordinarily would be indifferent, if not hostile to one another. It speaks to his creative genius that his music has been able to impact so many people in such a meaningful way.

From time to time I will go on a spree of watching videos on YouTube. While I think it's great that a platform exists where anyone can upload content for people to watch, like everything these days, it comes with a set of trade-offs. It is disconcerting to me to watch a video of a DIY political punk band railing against the system, but in order to do so I have to watch a commercial for Ram trucks or some other corporate bullshit. When you think back to how politicized punk was in the '80s, no one would have stood for a corporate advertisement in *MRR* or corporate sponsorship of a hardcore punk show. The other thing that blows my mind is looking at the counter of how many views the videos have. For instance, there is a video of a band I was in, playing a house show that was maybe attended by 30 or 40 people at most. That video has 23,000 views. There's nothing special about the video either, it's just a crust band playing a house show. Similarly, I sometimes look at people who have uploaded to YouTube the audio of albums I played on or released. It's crazy to see records that maybe sold 1,000 copies at most with 10 or 15,000 views. On the one hand it is great that there is a platform to share all of this music for free, especially music that has long been out of print or unavailable. I will admit that I listen to online streaming and stuff uploaded to YouTube all the time. I will listen to something on my computer just to save the trouble of getting up and walking across the room to put the record on the turntable. However, there is a disconnect now between one's participation in the scene and purely the consumption of music as a commodity. When one would buy a record at a gig, you were directly supporting that band and record label and therefore subsidizing their endeavors. Now when you listen, you are only really subsidizing Google or whoever owns YouTube. Just as using PayPal and credit cards has made mail ordering records much easier than it was in the '80s, it also means that the same corporations the punks were protesting against now get a percentage of everything we do. This won't stop me from streaming music because like everyone, I appreciate the convenience, but it's a long way from what people were thinking in the '70s and '80s when they first generated this "content."

From the start, I never really gave a shit about downloading. There is a huge amount of content that I technically "own the rights"" to that is uploaded to YouTube, blogs, etc. I have never cared much. As long as the bands are OK with it, the more people check out the music, the better. But it's strange that our subculture has been reduced to providing the content for these corporate media platforms. Even if we are not directly paying them for hosting the material, they are using the activity to harvest data, push advertising, or force us to watch ads. I think it's really too bad that given all the smart people in the punk scene there wasn't some kind of DIY platform invented for all this stuff early on. At least when we were trading cassettes and VHS tapes we had a lot of control over the content and who saw it. I'm not sure I'm ready to go back to those days, but there is a certain nostalgia for the time when only the diehards had access to crucial content and then on a "need to know" basis. I'm sure most people will consider this elitism, but you could also just view it as the other extreme of the spectrum to making everything available for free to anyone but using a corporate platform to do it. You can skip this ad in 4...3...2...



Best For Last; or,
What Makes A Mutant Shuffle?

I'm late, but I can't blame the weather. The month this column was intended to drop, I spent some time dickin' around in, and around, Oklahoma City. Then digression followed absence as I spent a column hyperbolizing the mundane in an existential crisis, but hey!, at least it was better than having to endure John Caution's cop-kissing in the pages of *No Friends*. And rather than seeking to regain lost trust after countless bait-and-switches, some promises broken, and deferred follow through on many others, it's my sincere hope that these past few months have been sufficient in lowering your standards, that the blow might be softened from further and imminent disappointment.

Before ink ever met paper, I conceived of an exploration, an exultation in three parts of the choicest locales the South has to offer. To that end, I've succeeded and have every intention of seeing it through to a satisfactory

conclusion. But things got hairy when, for the second month's teaser, I boasted of a thrilling conclusion, written into a corner with the promise of some "best" still yet to come. The further I moved chronologically from those words, the further I moved in confidence. There is, I believe, a clear distinction between that which *is* and that which *isn't*, between the good and the bad. I've never been above talking shit, the deflation of the more bloated egos among us jockeying for mass validation is, surely, a worthwhile and necessary endeavor, but placing peers and equals into unnecessary competition is something that I want no part in. Greensboro, Asheville, Orlando, et al. were incredible experiences and suggesting some sort of "above and beyond" greatly diminishes their efforts. And here I am, late as always, though not the latest I've ever been. The concept, the promise changed, but better for it; not the column I intended, but the one it always should have been. Without further delay: the last moments of vibrancy and love we felt in the Lower Third.

Last March, FAD packed into a car and drove a couple hundred miles to play with us in Nashville. In a dim, tiny corridor of a dim, tiny house, stuffed to the brim by just a dozen or so people, they plowed through a ten minute set. While they seemingly met with little local fanfare, we were floored. We struck up conversation with Birminghamians and have kept in touch ever since. Axe-man Ricky booked the gig at his house, a big brick two-story situated dead center on Fraternity Row dubbed Halloweentown. Despite being decorated for the holiday, the lights and camp only succeeded in making the basement less foreboding. There were hidden corner rooms obscured until the last second by always damp brick columns, chains and nails seemed to jut out all over; the sloping concrete floor prevented one from ever really finding their balance. I was "enthused" and "overjoyed" to learn that not one, but two noise acts would "kick start" the night, but my reservations were unwarranted. ZENOSYNE combined guitar feedback with minimal, ranted vocals and drums that alternated between militaristic and tribal, while COILING LIGHT offered a more robotic, synthezoid approach befitting a solo performer armed with a computer. SNAKE CHURCH set the tune for an all too brief display of masks, whirring lights, and flailing limbs, their mix of early JERRY'S KIDS and GANG GREEN with more contemporaneous pogo-inducing ish à la BETA BOYS or BAD ERIC provided a suitable soundtrack for the palpable need to freak. For the third straight time, FAD left me in awe. I still haven't figured out exactly what they're going for, though that's a credit to their craft. In the clear cues taken from HOAX, they share some similarities to Nebraska's almighty BIB, but whereas that Omaha powerhouse tempers that influence with Midwestern pragmatism, the boys from B-Ham infuse it with some seriously swampy creepiness. There's various other debris circling the whirlwind, bitter slices of RORSCHACH and FAILUREFACE colliding with the chaos of ORCHID or AMPERE, all combined and condensed into a viable package. After the house cleared out, the housemates gorged on pizza and smoked out some of the band (no names, ya narcs!). My eyelids drooped as I fell asleep singing along to "Toucha Toucha Touch Me" blaring from the TV.

Our path along the coast paralleled that of Hurricane Patricia, a super-storm that wreaked havoc through the Gulf states, but I would have played in an irradiated crater if it meant spending time with the Hattiesburg crew would continue unimpeded. As with the B-Ham gig, the roots of this three-day leg rest in the frigid winter of 2015. I got an email regarding a "HARDCORE" compilation I'm curating from a band called BAGHEAD. This email has stuck with me beyond continued correspondence, beyond meeting face to face. Even now, over a year removed, of getting to know these people as friends, I'm struck by its bluntness. "Baghead from Hattiesburg, MS, the hardest place to be a punk." It wasn't an exaggeration, a challenge, or a brag, just a statement of fact exchanged between two small town assholes. I had waited for this night for months and was still unprepared for what they had in store. Patty's rear guard looming just behind us, dark and heavy, we made it up the driveway and into the Porn Hall with our gear just as it started pouring. We sat around playing with Zack and Hampton's dogs, nerding out about the golden age of professional wrestling and Grant Morrison's Superman run with the crew that had already gathered in the living room. Sarah and Oleysa showed up with a fucking feast and shortly thereafter Oleysa's band DUMSPELL played their very first show. The crowd exploded with the very first note, pogoing and somersaulting in time with their high energy rock'n'roll. There isn't a better point of reference for the sound and vibe of this band than PUNK. They're the embodiment of low-key, anti-authoritarian swagger countered by residual high-school art-dork nervousness, a pair of deep dark sunglasses obscuring both the evil eye and a bad case of acne. LIMBOS, another relatively new outfit, kept the joint movin' and shakin' with a blunter, meat-and-potatoes spin on a style DAWN OF HUMANS perfected across three seven inches, then flubbed on the long-player. HARBOR provided a much needed breather, the high point of their set being when the drummer led the crowd through a couple of verses of "Chattahoochee," an Alan Jackson classic. By now, you've heard BIG BLEACH; maybe you've even seen them outdoors at 10 AM on a drizzly-assed Saturday, so we can all agree this band is fucking perfect. They're wild and irreverent, what the HIVES would refer to as "up-tempo venomous poison." In true rock'n'roll fashion, scattered across their growing body of songs are so many riffs lifted and twisted from other sources to suit their bratty, trebly needs. The guitars cut, the drums drive, the voice sasses and mocks. If that sounds unappealing, then you're a fuckin' bore! To appease their fun-hating neighbors, BAGHEAD shaved their set down to a mere five minutes, so my near-year of waiting got two days tacked on. We whiled the rest of the night away dissecting the regional differences between scenes while Zack's brother demonstrated his five-string bass proficiency.

Since his BIG BLEACH bandmates were occupied, Hampton hopped in the van for the two-hour trip south to NOLA. We chewed cud on small-town punk life and probably the CIVIC PROGRESS – Disposable EP, but when you write about something seven months after the fact, who's to say, really? The post-Pat grey gloom hanging low over the city, we tried exploring some of the city's cemeteries just to find them all flooded and, still being rather early in the day, our trip through the French Quarter proved fairly uneventful for the town, but still would have made the most hardened exhibitionist blush. The promise of an alligator in the city fountain proved untrue. ROOM 101 was the greatest one-person band I've ever experienced. While a projector beamed propaganda onto a makeshift screen, ROOM 101 jerked and writhed. The guitar, like the man himself, sounded so raw and broken, on the verge of collapse, yet everything seemed deliberate and controlled. Despite some of the heavy concepts at play, there was still a resounding "working-class"-ness imparted, not in pre-fab skinhead fashion, but a work-boots-and-flannel/D. Boon/Watt/econo-jamming kinda way. It should come as no surprise, but BIG BLEACH killed it. They covered ANGRY SAMOANS. GLAND brought the night to a close, I bopped to their surfin'-through-the-swamp grooves, a potent potion combining the best aspects of HAGAR THE WOMB, GUN CLUB, the CRAMPS, and a little bit o' CHALK CIRCLE.

Our gracious host Taylor tried in vain to locate an alligator for us, which begs the question: where is the south hiding their gators? Florida, NOLA, sketchy side-street gutters and sewers, all devoid of a certain deadly, green-skinned reptile. We called bullshit, skipped town, and never looked back. Our hearts and heads heavy with the thought of leaving behind new friends, the trip to Jackson was bittersweet. Growing up in NWI, abandoned houses and buildings are fairly commonplace, but I've never seen boarded up sky-rises. Coupled with a third day of rain, the city's desolate downtown seemed haunted, providing a perfect backdrop for Jackson's premiere punk foot-soldier Jesse to establish Big Sleepy's, the all-ages venue/speakeasy hosting the festivities. After the venue filled up with familiar faces from the couple of days, Jesse's band CANDY PAINT played. Like a less pretentious FUCKED UP, they lumbered through their set with the finesse and etiquette of a two-ton gorilla. After months, then days, then hours, after what could have been an eternity, BAGHEAD played under the dull yellow lights of Big Sleepy's. Now, they say there's no one thing that constitutes "hardcore," but that's bunk. There's always *a* vibe, *a* feeling, something or someone with so

much gravity, making so much noise that you can't help but feel it, too. BAGHEAD has it, a roiling discontent, an unabated discomfort that both bears and is born of hardcore. There's a list of influences I could run through, the myriad nods to decades worth of Midwestern outfits both obvious and obscure, but BAGHEAD is a feeling above all else. Cincinnati's DEATH SEX ADVOCATES pulled a real Ralph and showed up an hour after our set. The Chicagoans that hype this band aren't well known for their discerning tastes, but they laid down some blistering, both-sides-of-the-BLATZ/FILTH-split madness, sating a hunger I didn't know I had. The BUG, BAGHEAD, and Jesse kicked rocks and talked shit for well over an hour in the back lot, waiting for someone to finally break down and get sentimental before we parted ways.

This city, these cities, these bands, like that BAGHEAD email, removed by time and thousands of miles, still serve as reminders. As the shufflin' creeps across the country, people are getting hip to the fact that if you are determined and willful, built of sturdier stuff than the bed-wetting cosmopolitans spoon-fed punk nightly, it is possible to build something fulfilling and powerful enough to command the nation's attention.

Wake up to the real deal.

Next month: The Future
Contact: anyonecanbethebug@gmail.com

Totally Lame Changes Venues!

Okay Bay urchins, so this is fucking wild, but by the time you are reading this I won't be living with you anymore! I know that not all of us had the chance to share a punk or nü lesbian house. I haven't had, the pleasure I'm sure, to share even a beer with all of you San Francisco Bay Area punks and *MRR* writers and readers. But you know what? I love you. I really do.

My mom lived in San Francisco for ten years before she had me. Did I ever tell you that? But I was born in her home state and town, Clinton, New Jersey. Same as Imogen! What?! An unlikely place to squeeze out such people. I don't regret growing up there as a small countryish town girl looking forward to weekends pretending to know how to get around New York accessibly. I don't regret having to draw future me with pink hair and a pink car living in San Francisco. It does still feel pink to me somehow. But, like, smog pink and shellfish pink and laquered nails pink and succulent blossom pink and dogs with dye jobs pink and pussy pink, okay? I know that I write about the Bay the way that Francesca Lia Block writes about LA and I actually do not give a fuck because she is a punk and I am a young adult, OK?

The other night I was at a show seeing Dyke Drama and Potty Mouth with my friend Vanessa and we were talking about time. Because we/I are always talking about time. Chronosystems, man. Why do I always feel like I am being visited by myself from another time, but also like I am somehow out of time? Vanessa says she rushed being born and now still moves too fast for her own liking. So she wants a hand tattoo that says "always on time" to remind herself it's okay. She looks like a mermaid and talks with plant spirits that have always been talking, we just haven't always been listening or believing we could listen well. Like right now I am listening to Potty Mouth's self-titled EP while I write this and I am reminded of listening to Liz Phair's *Exile in Guyville* or *White Chocolate Space Egg* and how those albums were so fucking dirty and necessary for me when I was a tween learning that my sexual desires didn't have to be standard or even couth. Is that a word by itself? Canny is. But, like, I don't remember exactly how it felt to like Liz Phair as much as I know that I did. And now I like Potty Mouth so fucking much. They are from a place that was once also my home! Ah Northampton, like Clinton 3.0.

And Dyke Drama. I actually cannot talk about Dyke Drama. Because I adore everything about Sadie's music and her way vocally and seriously and jokingly and then she passes by me when Vanessa and I are perching on the couch by the merch and the bathroom and it might be normal to say hi because we write near each other like neighbors but I can't because I feel shy. In this way it is nice to know that things haven't changed. Hopefully in Seattle I will still be an awkward lipstick and choker-wearing bidyke with face tattoos feeling rock'n'roll deep in my tits and not saying hi to people between the merch and the bathrooms. I can't take too much change. But I know I have. I know I do.

Here here here I have not fallen in love with individual humans as many times as I thought I would but I have fallen in love with parts of the street and the sky. I have fallen in love with groupings of people and parts of my broken bones or rotting flesh. I have lived in three different houses here. This last one, Nü Lesbos, balancing its butt so sweetly on the corner of the Nut (chest) and 28th St, of which I have become so proud. I have known my neighbors, intimately, in ride or die ways. I have made my first Black and disabled comrades here. I have carved out my sexuality and embodied inspiration here. I have become something of an artist and somewhat of an adult here. When I first decided to move, I was very in love with someone who lives in Seattle (and still am, hence more impetus to move!) and was feeling very disaffected with my body and my experience after a sexual assault and a broken leg. Having begun to truly heal from these things, I am able to see the Bay that was always there, no matter how it has grown in difficulty of survival. This place that let me lose my balance and right myself in my own time. I could not be more excited about what's next, and I could not be more devastated about what I have hatched that I am leaving behind. If my queer family wasn't coming with me, wasn't trying to gently carry our politics and the clay of our forming life together from Oakland to Seattle, I would be left feeling much more absurdly severed between worlds.

I have been finding myself writing poems about the Bay in my head between conversations. Unless I remember to whip out my phone and use voice to text, which has been an access tool I have appreciated the fuck out of lately (made super cool to me by my brown femme crip punk auntie and comrade/diva sister/peer Leah Lakshmi), then I forget what I was composing by the time the next person talks to me. But it is happening at night, at bars the most often. When I have the chance to be drunk and outside, like at El Rio. Or even today, pearly grey daytime, walking to meet Oscar and Indigo and Norhan for coffee on Telegraph near my house. I have been feeling strung out level oversocialized lately. I realize this is how I used to live all the time when I was traveling and living in places for two months at a time. Packing all the goodness in. Too drunk to die, as an ex-girlfriend of mine used to say? I'm tired. I need a break from voices. But what choice do I have? I am saying goodbye. And I am #blessed with the ability to make friends. Some of whom I am not entirely sure of the depth of my relationship to at any given time. But like tons of friends. Who all mean a lot to me, no matter what I mean to them. Like songs. And now I'm learning I do mean something to them. Like if your favorite songs turned around and thanked you right back. I mean, relationships should be reciprocal. So it shouldn't be surprising. But it still is. And in the Bay, we are all hustling so hard to keep holding on, sinking the tips of our bloody fingers and, goddess forbid, our teeth into the day to day, that it's easy to lose track of people.

That did it. I'm crying now. Everything I said above was really lame but that is just how it is right now, I am fast and small and shaking like a hummingbird trying to suck it all up, and any drop of water will get me soaked and soggy sappy. So I'll have to grow for Seattle, because I hear it rains there. But it's a slow transition. More like a mirror image of what I have been doing for the past two and half years when I met Tony. Already in the fall and winter I have gigs lined up in the Bay, so don't cry for me, San Francisco. There's a pretty cute queer punk pipeline (or starbridge, if that's more your thing) between here and Seattle, or rather, between here and the Bay!

ENDNOTES:

1) Too exhausted for accessibility shoutouts.
2) I'm stoked to spend more time in the places where some of my favorite sounds are from.

3) Be gentle with me, Seattle.
4) Hella and hyfy will forever be important words in my vocabulary.
5) Grace and Brendan, you're doing so great! Please keep taking such good care of this sweet ugly grey baby with teeth. (Not a baby, maybe, it is older than me. But it is precious and unwieldy!).
6) I am not really going anywhere for you, because to you I exist in written form.

Why not exist in written form for me too? Email me: foxlovesriver@gmail.com. Punk snail mail: 3805 South Orcas St, Seattle, WA 98118.

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

I think podcasts might be punk? I mean, I'm not the punk police, I'm not in charge of it, but I've been having this experience for a while now where I have this long commute to work every day and I spend the whole time listening to stuff but, as you are aware, all new music blows and all old music is played out. So for a while I was just listening to horror movie podcasts, but then I realized hold up, there are probably weirdo trans women making weirdo podcasts, and that is all I want to listen to. So I looked around and found some and now I guess I still listen to horror podcasts but mostly all I listen to for two hours every fucking day is weirdo trans women talking about whatever it is that weirdo trans women talk about.

We all live in our own subjective individual worlds inside our heads, and these worlds are mostly made up of our own individual subjective experiences of the things we're exposed to, right? Like you can know that we live in a world where capitalism makes everything bad for everybody all the time but you start going to shows or whatever, twice a week, where people acknowledge that and talk about it and you get to flip out about it a little and then your world doesn't feel like it's made out of toxic capitalism in the same way that it used to. Your world starts to feel to you like a place where there's a lot of punkers in it.

Does that make sense? Look: I don't want to blow your mind here, but there are a lot of trans women in the world. There always have been. But if you watch TV and listen to the radio and watch movies you pretty much wouldn't know it. I mean recently you've been getting "Caitlyn Jenner is a celebrity" and "trans people are not legally allowed in bathrooms" and stuff but you're not getting, like "trans women are playing in metal bands" or "trans women are pushing back against unethical immigration policies" or "trans women exist and are boring and relatively uninteresting/nontoxic (especially compared to Donald Trump)."

Or: "trans woman are making podcasts."

I guess it's 2016 at this point. I think we can probably acknowledge that it's no longer Not Punk to use the internet or to have a phone full of mp3s or whatever. I guess it's arguable whether cyberpunk is punk—steampunk isn't punk, so why would cyberpunk be punk—but to some extent we definitely do live in a dystopian cyberpunk future in which, as the *METROPOLARITY* manifesto puts it, "TODDLERS ON TOUCHSCREENS CAUSE THEIR FINGERS WAS BORN WITH IT." You know? And look, wild-eyed futurists in the '90s did a lot of talking about how the internet was going to democratize everything, and we've seen how well that worked out. Right? Everything pretty much stayed the same: now we live online but it's still like, if you don't work to find something else, you find the same unquestioned acceptance of the premises of our culture (capitalism, colonialism, sexism, et cetera). And it's still like, if you look, you can often find something better.

But the thing is? The internet and living in the future have made it way easier to do that looking. It's easier now than it was in the '90s—at least as far as I can tell—to find weirdos who are trying to do cool things. To resist.

And it's not really tinfoil hat territory, I don't think, to be like "I want to live in a world where I'm reminded a lot more often that weirdos are trying to resist." Because weirdos have always been trying to resist—it's just that widely available media has never existed for us or by us and it still doesn't give a fuck about us. It wouldn't even know *how* to give a fuck about us—as evidenced by how consistently somebody can come up from an underground/resistance perspective, get involved in that no-longer-DIY world, look up a couple years later and realize that they've unintentionally been chewed up by the blob and had their work turned into something completely different from what it was. In a bad way.

Look: I fucking love how easy it is to hear a podcast some wingnut in another country made on their phone and I fucking love what it does to the way my life feels to listen to that instead of listening to whatever progressive-but-mostly-relative-to-garbage stuff is on NPR this morning or whatever, when I'm too tired for blastbeats. You know? The underground still exists and it's more accessible than ever, if you're looking for it.

I just want to live in a world where we're the media. You know?

So.

This is how you make a podcast. If you have a computer already, you can do it for free.
1. There are hella free voice recorder programs for phones and computers. Record yourself talking into one.
2. Save that as a sound file.
3. Ask a friend who has a band if you can use one of their songs for a theme song. If they say no, either they're not punk or you're an asshole and they don't trust you.
3.5 If they say no, make a searching and fearless moral inventory of yourself to determine whether you are the asshole here or what.
4. Download this free program, Audacity, on a laptop or desktop or whatever.
5. Fuck around with it for a minute, you'll figure it out. It's a multitrack recording studio kind of thing, where you import sound files and move them around and stuff. (If you have a Macintosh you probably already have Garageband. It's basically the same thing.)
6. Import some files. Play the theme song and play that recording of yourself talking. Import another song. Import yourself talking about it. Import another song. Or don't import any songs, just say some stuff! Who cares!
7. Export the whole thing as an mp3.
8. Make an account at archive.org. Upload the mp3 of your podcast to it. (Also upload live performances of your shitty band to it, and videos, and whatever else. Archive.org rules.) They will host it for free.
9. Make a blog named after your podcast at wordpress.com.
10. Make a post that has the mp3—which is now hosted at archive.org—embedded as a playable sound file.
11. Make an RSS feed for your WordPress blog at feedburner.com.
12. Submit that RSS feed to iTunes.

That's it! It takes a couple days to get approved, but iTunes will approve your shit because it rules and then it'll be in the iTunes store and then any idiot in the world can hear your opinions about whatever your opinions are about on their computer or their phone or whatever. I mean I guess that is kind of a lot of steps but look, you can figure it out in an afternoon and then once you've got that infrastructure in place it takes like twenty minutes to get a podcast together and put it online. And I mean really it's like record that shit, edit that shit, upload that shit, light that shit, post it. You know?

There are definitely legit ethical objections to the actual truth that iTunes probably is not a corporate entity that you can trust, but guess I don't feel stressed about it. There's probably other ways to get your podcast out but as far as I can tell they are just an enormous corporate distro that doesn't pay me but also I don't pay them? Make your own call about that though. Maybe in the dystopian future iTunes is a major label? Unclear.

If you want to know more about podcasts, here are some ones that you can listen to: Nia King's *We Want The Airwaves*, Merritt Kopas's *Woodland Secrets*, Emma Frankland's *None Of Us Is Yet A Robot*, Morgan M Page's *One From The Vaults*, the *MRR* radio show one, *Knifepoint Horror*, the *Sad Punks* podcast, my own sick podcast *Imogen Watches Classic Films* (I record it in my car while I drive). There are tons of other ones. I'm probably forgetting hella podcasts by people who contribute to

this here very magazine. I dunno. My point is just that a podcast is a thing that you can do yourself so you should probably do one.

In issue #390, I covered a couple of historic effects that emerged during the golden and silver age of electric guitar. Aside from the rudimentary effects that I described, the rise of technologies during the '70s and '80s brought a lot of interesting stomp boxes to play with. But I figured out that all the effects are pretty mysterious to a lot of people, so here's the first part of a small depictive list commonly encountered in the guitar and bass world.

Fuzz: You've heard this effect countless times, but you probably never questioned it much because of its close nature with distortion pedals, but both are different beasts even if they aim to replicate an overloading tube amp. The Fuzz Box is a step beyond distortion because of its nasty, rough, and brutal tone. It is designed to literally destroy your guitar sound. Going back into some recording history might clue you into more about this great effect.

In 1961 a Nashville session player Grady Martin was recording a guitar track for a Marty Robins tune, "Don't Worry," when his guitar amp starting acting crazy. For the first time, a fuzz sound was recorded to tape. When the track was released, a band called the Ventures heard it and immediately asked their friend Red Rhodes if he could replicate the sound. Obviously he did it and that is how the fuzz effect was born. A few months later the Ventures released their album *2000 Pound Bee*, which is believed to contain the first recordings of the new fuzz circuit.

Popularity in the sound grew when the Kinks' guitarist Dave Davies used an amp that's speaker had been slashed with a razorblade to record their 1964 hit "You Really Got Me." This was the first time that a song driven by distorted power chords was ever made popular.

The fuzz circuit was then first produced and manufactured by a company called Maestro under the name "Fuzz Tone," Model FZ-1. In the summer of 1965, Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones used one to record "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." Because of the success of that single, the FZ-1 was completely out of stock by December.

Other classic fuzz pedals include the Electro Harmonix Big Muff Pi, Fuzz Face, Shin-ei Companion, Vox Tone Bender, and the Mosrite FuzzRITE. You can hear plenty of Big Muff sounds on the whole Dinosaur Jr. discography, J. Mascis being well known for his huge Big Muff collection.

Overdrive: If the fuzz pedal is the harsh and brutal end of the spectrum, overdrive is quite the opposite. The overdrive pedal once again tends to replicate the sound of an overloaded tube amplifier, but in a subtle way. This little stompbox aims to sound like a lightly crunching amplifier, so don't expect anything heavy and brutal there. Instead it's a light crunchy sound great for blues or garage sounds.

You've probably heard about the most used pedal circuit in all history: the Ibanez/Maxon Tubescreamer. It's hard to find a guitarist who doesn't use this pedal regularly or at least own one. Popular pedals such as the Fulltone Fulldrive, Boss SD-1, Visual Sound Route 66, Cusack's Screamer, Voodoo Lab Sparkle Drive, and about a thousand more by almost every pedal maker on the planet. To better explain overdrive/distortion, let's look at the origin of this classic pedal.

Once upon a time a man named Mr. S. Tamura got a brilliant idea. He noticed that players had problems getting good tone in small venues where they couldn't crank their tube amps. Because of the nature of the tube amp, the louder it's played the more it breaks up into a natural crunchy overdrive. Tamura developed his circuit to simulate that break up and came out with one of the most important circuits in music history.

Beside the famous Tubescreamer there are a couple of other great designs like the Paul C. Timmy, the also very famous and expensive Klon, the Mad Professor Sweet Honey OD, and a couple more.

You can use an overdrive pedal in a few different ways. The first and most classic is to drive a fairly clean sounding amplifier into a light and bluesy crunch. One other trick is to use an already distorted amplifier, like a JCM800 into high gain territories by boosting the head with the overdrive, adding more gain to it. Most overdrive pedals also have the property to act as a booster on all the frequencies, or selected ones. The Tubescreamer is a perfect example of a mid-range boosted overdrive, hence why it's also really great for soloing. The Klon, unlike the Tubescreamer, boosts your whole signal, so you can push your tube amp even harder and get more distortion out of it. An overdrive pedal is usually a guitarist's best secret weapon.

Distortion: The distortion pedal lies between the overdrive and the fuzz, and most of the time it is made to emulate a specific distorted preamp from a tube amp, but not always. It is probably the effect you're most familiar with in the punk scene. Why would anybody try to get some distorted sounds out of a stomp box when you can achieve the same effect with a tube amplifier? First, it is way more affordable than a tube amplifier. It's also easy to carry with you, so you can play on a variety of amplifiers and still keep your sound. Of course it can add a different kind of layer to your guitar sound if you tend to play with different distortion boxes, but you should be aware that nothing will ever replace the sound of a good tube amp cranked up.

There are plenty of famous distortion pedals that you've probably already encountered, like the Boss DS-1, made famous by Kurt Cobain from Nirvana, the Pro Co RAT, which is a really good distortion pedal a lot of people use to drive a Marshall JCM800 wild, or even the Marshall Bluesbreaker and the MXR Distortion +. A couple of my favorites also include the Suhr Riot or the MXR Fullbore Metal, but you can find countless other artifacts that can do a great job too.

Next time we will dig into modulation related effects like delays, phasers, or flangers, but that's enough for now. In the meantime take care of yourself and other people and go play some music.

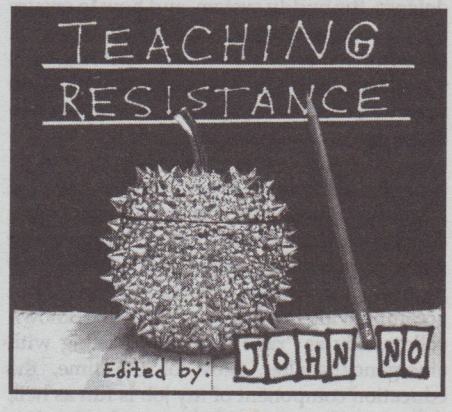
instrumentsoneohone@gmail.com

ENDNOTES:

1) A band from Ghent called Partisan was on the same gig as Diät in Antwerpen and they are the very best thing I've seen in a long while. They blend the Wipers with noisier stuff like Sonic Youth, but in a great and subtle way. Apparently this band is made up of people from Oathbreaker and Rise and Fall and I can definitely tell that my favorite kind of rock music is played by the punk kids. Go check them out, for real, it's really great and they were amazing on stage.

2) So, I finally ended up meeting the coordinator that got me writing there in the first place, and she is ace.

3) On that same gig was a band called Imaginary Dictionary. Their singer is from another great band called Vogue. They play straight up speed punk hardcore, and it's awesome too.



This month's Teaching Resistance *frankly reflects on doing the necessary (and difficult) task of teaching young students what consent means, and how that teaching is impacted and must be informed by the existence of very real structural and socio-economic schisms in society as a whole. The column's author is Sam Dillinger, a sexual violence prevention educator and advocate for survivors in the Bay Area. Sam can be emailed directly at specialagentmcnab@gmail.com.*

Sex and Violence: The Dynamics of Prevention Education

The Rotten Agenda

When I was in school, we didn't talk about rape, at least not in any educational context. We may have watched the news, overheard our parents talking about what "that poor girl" was wearing, or how much she had to drink, and lament the fact that their daughters would be advised of the safety precautions so they would never fall prey to becoming victims of their own ignorance. Consent, as it applies to sex, wasn't a concept I was familiar with until my late teens, which was long after I had become sexually active. Rape, as far as my peers and I knew, was something that happened to girls and women who didn't know how to protect themselves, and was always perpetrated by an obese, pedophilic creep who would inevitably chop us up into little pieces afterward because he hated his mother (any of you who were also raised by Jewish women can probably recall this familiar anecdote). This notion often led to confusion, however, as it seemed that any time an act of sexual violence was perpetrated by one of our peers, it was almost always met with the age-old idiom "boys will be boys." Of course, no one ever mentioned that boys were victimized too.

At some point, our paradigm for discussing rape started to shift. Adult women grew tired of having their outfits, sexual history, alcohol consumption, and curfew policed and started demanding that we begin to hold rapists accountable for their actions rather than teach people how to avoid being raped. Straight men became sick of having their masculinity questioned every time they didn't want to have sex, or having their experience of sexual assault disregarded entirely. Still, based on my job title, people often assume that I teach rape prevention techniques that include self-defense, the buddy system, and how to ensure that no one spikes your drink. Rather, I teach a comprehensive curriculum that includes topics such as boundaries, consent, and date rape. To put it bluntly, I teach kids how not to be fucking rapists.

What We Do is Secret

I am a prevention educator and an advocate at a Bay Area Rape Crisis Center. I teach sexual violence prevention and I also advocate for rape victims, which can be anything from accompanying them to forensic exams (known colloquially as "rape kits") to assisting with emergency shelter. Most of the time, the education component of my job is fun as hell, but one of the biggest challenges that we face as educators is to confront the different ways that gender, culture, privilege, and economic disparity all greatly affect how our curriculum is received by our students and their ability to apply it to their own lives. Most of us in the rape crisis biz are cheerleaders for prevention, but sometimes it feels like while we're patting ourselves on the back for all of our important work. We lose sight of a simple but important fact: *Our curriculum needs to be effective in order for it to be meaningful.* It's not enough to hand kids the legal definition of consent and expect them to know what to do with it, and it's not enough to tell them that rape is bad because most of them already know that. As educators, we have a responsibility to make our curriculum applicable to the lives of our students. Essentially what we're teaching is empathy while simultaneously combating the institutionalized sexism, racism, and classism that they have been exposed to their entire lives.

The places where I teach span a wide range of demographics. The county where I work harbors some of the most elite and privileged youth in the Bay Area, as well as some of the most disenfranchised and economically disadvantaged. The schools that I go into are predominantly white and affluent and the students in my juvenile hall groups are primarily black and Latino. A person enjoying a person who views the world from an opposing vantage point. The privileged person may have difficulty feeling empathy because they have never needed to in order to be considered a "good person," while the disadvantaged person may struggle because they likely haven't felt as if anyone has been empathetic towards them. I am generalizing here, because this is not to say that privileged folks are never empathetic and that less advantaged folks are all callous. I'm only illuminating the fact that it's human nature to have our capacity to feel for others entangled with our own life experiences.

So, the big question is what are the implications of this for prevention educators? How do we cater to students' sensibilities while being careful not to preemptively assign their responses to them based on their socioeconomic status? I don't fucking know, but I can make an educated guess. The primary difference between fortunate and less fortunate youth is this: Privileged kids have a hard time accepting the fact that sexual assault is prevalent in their affluent, well-to-do communities. Under privileged kids, on the other hand, are well aware of the sexual assault in their communities, but they find it hard to care about it because they face so many other problems that actually affect them more directly. Ignorance and apathy have both long been the peaks of the systemic plague concerning sexual violence, and it's imperative that they be addressed systematically but separately.

Hey, Little Rich Boy

Rich kids like rules. Well, maybe they don't *like* them, but they fear and understand them. Consequences can seem more severe to people who have never had to experience them. If I tell a classroom full of upper-class teenagers the definition of legal consent, they're more apt to pay attention if they think there will be legal ramifications if they inadvertently break the law during a sexual encounter. Most of their questions begin with, "Will I go to jail if..." and then they plug in some really obscure scenario. Conversations can continue with these types of hypothetical questions for an eternity if I don't eventually redirect and tell them we need to move on. Moreover, most of these kids are, conventionally speaking, "good students." To them, that means participating and listening just enough to ace the rape-myth exam we administer at the end of every presentation. I have to wonder though, what are they really getting out of it?

Sometimes I have presentations that felt super productive, and then during the last fifteen minutes we'll do "anonymous questions" and my cardboard box will be filled with little pieces of paper written on in teenage boy scratch that say things like, "ur hot" and "do u like 2 choke on dick." In those moments I think, *goddamn, what is the fucking point?* It's frustrating to be sexually harassed by a little pissant teenager whose knowledge of sex doesn't span further than the porn he watches on the new iPhone his parents bought him, literally seconds after you committed the last two hours of your life thinking that you're doing your part to dismantle the patriarchy. But then, in that same class, there can be the girl who approaches you afterward with tears in her eyes, asking for help because a boy texted naked pictures of her to the entire school, or the boy who had never been told that women could rape men, and he wants to talk about the sexual assault he endured at age twelve. For every twenty teenagers that I want to cause grievous, bodily harm to, there are always one or two that make it worth my time.

Still Out of Order

The county where I work is not very diverse, but the groups that I facilitate in juvenile hall are predominantly comprised of Black and Latino residents. These participants tend to be more respectful than the aforementioned demographic, but they often have a strict set of ideologies pertaining to sex, sexual orientation, and gender roles. It can be difficult to combat the ideas that they have about men and women and who is allowed to engage in what kind of behavior. Again, this group can generally agree that rape is bad, but the challenge is getting them to understand that the way society functions as a whole contributes to the high rates of sexual abuse. It's not very labor intensive to explain the extremely high rates of sexual abuse in the United States; the task is asking them to think about *why.*

Most of these kids are not strangers to gender-based violence, but likely have not considered the ways in which our attitudes and language largely contribute to the normalization of this epidemic. I usually ask them to think about ways in which they've been discriminated against based on stereotypes about their gender, race, or class. Most group members can recall multiple times when they were treated differently from their white peers or had their morals or intelligence questioned by authority figures. We almost always talk

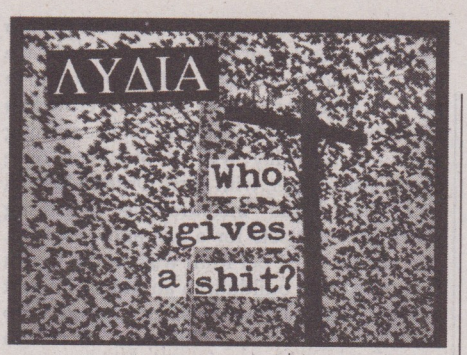
about law enforcement's affinity for getting trigger happy with Black and Latino kids, and I ask them to consider why these officers are seldom held accountable. They generally don't have to do much pondering before they realize that our list of discriminatory assumptions and stereotypes are the foundation of race and class-based violence. This initial conversation sets the framework for these kids to begin to draw the same conclusions about gender-based violence and sexual assault. They start to dismantle their own biases about gender and sexuality, realizing that the societal rules that they've learned only reinforce the status quo, which, in turn, reinforces their own oppression. Once they realize that conventional, narrow-minded attitudes about gender, sexual orientation, and sexuality *are* the rule, they become much more interested in breaking it.

Never Surrender

Everything I've written about so far really only scratches the surface of the dynamics and implications of prevention education. The suggested strategies for implementation are based only on my own observations. Moreover, I'm only recalling the best-case scenario moments and what has *worked;* I have little insight to lend to all of the times that my techniques have been met with apathy and blank stares. The outlying factors are just too numerous to count and analyze. It would be naïve to think that two hours or eight group sessions with these kids will eradicate a lifetime of being exposed to implicit messages about gender and sexuality that are misleading and harmless. Sometimes my line of work feels thankless, but only insofar as its effectiveness is immeasurable.

I assume that many of these concepts are redundant to a lot of *MRR*'s readers, however I'm in the punk scene too, and I know how easy it is to become complicit when we begin to feel like we're preaching to the choir. We might think, *Well, my community doesn't hang out with rapists* or *I'm not sexist or a bigot,* and while those are commendable attributes, it's not enough. Anyone who goes out into the world is quickly acquainted with the stark reality that rape apologists, sexism, and bigotry are the norm. We are often confronted with these ideologies and the people who embody them, but we rarely take the opportunity to educate because if they're not in our scene, then they're simply not worth our time. I'm not suggesting that we leap to our soapboxes every time we hear someone make a joke about "surprise sex," but we all might benefit from reinvigorating some of that political angst that we felt so strongly in our teens. Apathy and complacency are the pillars of a system that upholds the acceptance of sexual violence, and taking a moment to remember what drew us to this scene in the first place or occasionally standing up for our beliefs won't entirely dismantle this institution, but it might be a good start.

teachingresistance@gmail.com.



"I'D SELL MY SOUL BUT NO ONE'S BUYING"

The Diät tour had ended, and we had made it safely back to Berlin.

Berlin: a place where addictions come to reinvent themselves. Where drinking beers on trains is no biggie, the party starts after 4:00 am, and rolling a big fat *jozza* by the canal is common practice for locals and tourists alike, who both flock here from all corners of the earth. It's a chunky city with wide streets and pavements, clusters of massive modernist buildings, colorful murals on post-war project housing, green parks and grey skies, and a canal winding through the center, lined by leafy banks and cobbled walkways. It was the beginning of spring and the budding branches seemed to extend skyward as if stretching away the stiff winter and welcoming warmer days with open arms.

Every morning for a week, my kind host Iffi and I would wake up, jam our new radio pop song obsessions while eating porridge with ginger and almonds, then head to Static Shock Musik where we'd jam the Chain of Flowers record hella loud while opening up shop. At least Iffi was jogging every morning to detox from tour—I was waking and baking at the house and day-drinking on the bench outside the store. I was on a hedonist's quest, sans most of the resulting pleasure. I helped out with some odd jobs at the store (once a shitworker always a shitworker), walked around the Russian Memorial park twice and yet still failed to actually find the massive statue (what a loser), smoked a joint by the Brandenburg Gate and contemplated the evolution of identity in the age of the selfie stick, and lay under the sun in the park staring at the clouds that looked like dicks with wings, listening to Lust for Youth (so unpunk) and thinking about Blake, the demonization of the body, and the absurd things we sometimes do to dismantle the illusions in our head. I went to Bis Aufs Messer Records (they also sell their own yummy coffee!) and with beers by the canal, reunited with the lovely Beeney, who was a *MRR* shitworker my first summer in SF! I saw a packed Diät gig at Tommyhaus and danced to punk 45s and tunes by London's Scraps at the Acid Baby Jesus show at Urban Spree and drank divine Moscow Mules lined with dingos on the balcony at Kastanienkeller where Warsong from Zaragoza joined locals Sunbather in a packed and fun show. By far the most exciting band (and tightest drummer) I was introduced to this time around was Sick Horse, who play a mix of sinister psych garage and tense, snarky punk.

On what I thought was my last day—because I don't know how to read a bloody calendar—I woke up to barking dogs and smeared make-up. I stumbled out the house and through Alexanderplatz (the smell of sausage practically nauseating), walked through Museumsinseln but didn't actually go inside any of the museums, and almost fainted with dehydration by the canal with no corner store or café in sight for blocks or bridges. Poisoned by nicotine and negativity. With an extra day in town I felt suspended in my own mind, so I decided to avoid humans and sat on a bench by the river in the sun with *Low* on repeat for three hours. Then I drank my way to an early night at the store. An earth angel came my way—in that way they do out of nowhere—and, after chatting for a while about my meanderings, my life in the US, she realized I was the writer of what has comically devolved into *MRR*'s emo column, sans any of the music. "Yeah, you're more confused in person than you come across on paper." Ha, I liked her immediately! After Static Shock closed we went round the corner to hers where she cooked me up a mini feast and gave me beer and the most delicious home made vodka-lemon drink that her dad makes back in Poland—it was like heaven in a shot glass. We talked and smoked and jammed Total Control and made each other lists of bands to check out and her hospitality and open-heartedness humbled me. The next day it was "goodbye Berliners," and a done deal to return for the festival two weeks later.

"THE GREAT CONSPIRACY OF A MODERN COMEDOWN"

Hallo Berliners! I survived Nothing Nice to Say Fest! After landing and getting lost in Kreuzberg for over an hour, I finally found my way to West-Germany, where the art show was having its opening night. I almost cried with happiness when I saw some friends through the crowd, and as I downed that first, delicious cold lager, I felt like I was floating on air, my ears ringing, my head tingling. After a few more rounds we headed to Køpi for a Hell (!) show and what would turn into an epic night of fear and loathing in Kreuzberg with cheap beer, even cheaper drugs, and cheesy jukebox jams at Rote Rose ending at 9:00 am with insomnia in tears in the fetal position under the kitchen table. Off to a fantastic start as you can see. I dreamed a dream that night. *That dreamers often lie.* The next morning stomaching a glass of water was impossible and I promptly threw it up and fell back into to a delirious semi-slumber. An hour later I woke up panicked and panting and my host Ika greeted me with the news about Prince. Death of a king. FML. She fed me strawberries and bananas as we walked along the canal and I gained some strength, and as she recounted her first absolutely mental time in Berlin I also

gained some perspective. Definitely *not* still drunk, I danced around London's Leftover Fashion (it's a real place) looking for an extra layer 'cause, yeh, apparently it hails in Berlin in April. I found a pair of faux leather leggings with zippers across them and a sweater that ripped half way up the sleeve as soon as I put it on outside. It felt like an apt symbolism at the time.

I work…across the street, can't get too worked up. Diät were the main band I wanted to see the first night, and they were great, but I ate pizza while Thee Oops played and frankly avoided the main room while Night Birds were on stage—really not my thing, plus the no ins-and-outs, bouncers, and general big-club feel of SO36 wasn't my thing either. But I caught up with more friends, who were slowly rolling in from all across Europe and beyond, and that was half the point. The aftershow at Wowsville was so jammed fucking packed I was one elbowing away from snapping. Then a tall chap approached me and, in an admittedly charming accent, said "Hi. I'm Jack. Pitt." It took me a second to register, then my eyes bulged and I jumped with joy and hugged him, stoked to finally meet him, years after stumbling upon his blog while researching Yugo punk. We slouched around outside the bathrooms, the only place not already teaming with people—the whole venue dangerously over-capacitated—laughing at a piece of soggy pizza that sat nonchalantly on the ledge beside us. I went home early, happy to gather some strength (read: avoid emotional breakdown and/or public humiliation).

Friday I terrorized the record store and sat in the sun chatting to all the punks who were dropping by. Sex on the Beach at a place called Molotov, then off to Statthaus for the evening show. It has a large open courtyard looking out onto the river, which made for an ideal place to linger about, catch up, and catch cold. All bands pretty much nailed it, but Rixe and Belgrado were personal highlights. The aftershow on Friday at Køpi and Komma F was packed during Life Fucker who are mental and who made the walls shake. I loitered about the café the rest of the night, generally trying to keep it together, self-medicating to self-regulate my mood. It got hella cold and I was feeling miserable and deflated. I cabbed it home, grating my teeth and clenching my fists. *She can't stop what she can't even start.*

On Saturday I stubbornly stayed in bed until noon, listening to Prince's "If I Was Your Girlfriend," silently sobbing under the covers because all the people I look up to either die or let me down. Feeling like a flat line, I made a conscious effort to remain sedated—the sun shining, my gut churning, the scenery gliding past me in slow motion. I had no energy to freak out about getting lost—metaphorically or otherwise. I'd been setting myself up for disappointment, one expectation at a time. *There's nothing for me happening here, or maybe there is, maybe I'm running out of fear, or maybe life has only just begun when you're on the run.*

After lunch we walked through the park to Rauchhaus and I sat up front for Sick Horse (so sick!) and had nachos and a cappuccino in the back while Arms Race made the crowd go wild. Yes to women with flying Vs! The evening show on Saturday was at Statthaus once again, also a rager, with faves Orden Mundial and Una Bèstia Incontrolable delivering short but tight sets for a fun and feisty pit. The aftershow at Bei Ruth was on the fourth floor of a large building in an industrial part of town, with vast windows looking out onto the city centre. We had a hilarious cab ride to get there, our cabbie a middle-aged woman (also on speed?!) blasting Youssou N'dour, waving her arms in the air, drumming the dashboard, her hands basically anywhere but on the wheel. I'm glad we made it out alive to see Puff and Barcelona because they were both wicked! My bad habits had been getting the better of me the whole fucking trip—and it's not like I was resisting very hard—so by midnight I had fully given in to everything I know is bad for me. *I like the taste of lipstick, cigar smoke, the deep club lights, and being with you is fun.* Don't ask, don't tell. Some people are smart that way. Me? Just a fool with a bad memory.

By the time I got to Tommyhaus for Piss on Sunday evening I was ready for one final night of decadance [sic], anything to forget about the future. And the past, come to that. Piss were phenomenal (I love the bassist's vocals!) as was seeing Jack Pitt perform Whitney Houston's "How Will I Know" during karaoke afterwards! Also, Mary Jane from Vexx performing Madonna's "Like A Virgin" in a way only she can—it was stunning! (Check out her new project CC Dust!) The obvious highlight was spending time with old mates, making new friends, and meeting new earth angels. And of course getting to expel some daemons—I've acquired quite a collection it seems. *You're number 37, have a look.*

I tried to prevent my fate and stayed up drinking until 7:00 am and got to witness Joshy and Nordy perform an unplugged version of "Blue Skies Over the Ocean" at 5:00 am at the open mic night at the dive bar next to Tommyhaus after basically getting kicked out. A few hours later the plane was flying over the familiar waters of the Aegean, and the lunacy was over. I returned with a friend to Greece, where we spent a week driving around the Peloponnese, visiting sandy beaches, exploring medieval castles, eating amazing food, and drinking local wine. Aside from burning in the sun and one freak encounter with a Kalamata *cucaracha*, it was a fabulous and dreamy time. "I'm sick of beautiful places," she exclaimed as we drove up a winding road through a massive, rocky mountain, another breathtaking view coming into sight as we rounded the corner, "All Tomorrow's Parties" blasting from the car stereo. Where will she go indeed, I wondered, shifting in my seat uneasily, the towel beneath my thighs rubbing against my sunburn. *Those who burn their ass must sit on the blisters.*

ENDNOTES:

I'm sure you'll be pleased to read that this column is going on an indefinite hiatus. I picked up a couple cool zines along my travels, so maybe I'll write about those one day soon. I won't make any exit statements. For questions, comments, compliments and complaints, you can write me at *lydia@maximumrocknroll.com.*

For Storm Stereo podcasts with bands featured in these last few columns, interviews, and infrequent updates, go to obsessionism.wordpress.com.

Until then stay posi, stay strong, don't let no fucker put you down. Peace.

"I decided in my mind not so long ago
Not to be a part of the status quo.
To me I find that's best achieved
By becoming a part of the new breed!"
—Best Defense, "Lost Now Found"

"One day you shave your head
Put the boots on your feet.
You'll never accept defeat
Laced up with a shaven head
Boot boys make the rise again
This time it's up to us!"
—Victory, "Laced Up"

We All Loathed the Drone

Like a bulldog shaped bulldozer shoveling bulls and other bullshit into a China shop, you are about to witness the strength of Oi! knowledge! This instalment of *Still the New Breed* is a sight to behold; we're covering the whole gamut of Oi! this month. We got street-rock, we got yob-pop; thug-core, shaved-punk, and acoustic-Oi! We even got unhyphenated unadulterated pure Oi! The best in brick wall beautification is coming out our cauliflower'd ears! Right-wing, left-wing, full of hate!

BRIGADIER – *Power in Unity* EP (Mad Butcher): BRIGADIER is a band of commies from Russia; St. Petersburg to be exact. I'm not sure, but I think this is just SHAVED HEADS under a different name. Whereas SHAVED HEADS are more of a traditional (though still outspoken) Oi! band, BRIGADIER claims R.A.S.H and all of the songs are overtly political. You get two covers: "There is Power in the Union" by BILLY BRAGG and "Partisans" by BRIGADA FLORES MAGON. The originals are "Song for Anarchist Workers" and "Desert Flowers" about the YPG/YPJ militias. This is pretty standard new-school Oi! There are melodic guitar leads and some "whoa-oh" back-ups. It still has that ragged

Russian edge to it though. If you wished EVIL CONDUCT or SEASIDE REBELS had more of a growling rasp to the vocals, this might suit you. And if message over music is your thing, this is a good party record for your next roundtable on whether or not to invite the ghost of Murray Bookchin to your Joseph Weydemeyer appreciation day picnic/march. Here's to rockin' for rice'n'rations!

FALCATA – CD/EP (Bigorna / Zerowork): The three songs on Lisbon based FALCATA's debut EP are further proof that Oi! is not a monolith. The record opens with "On the Edge"; a bass heavy stomper with mid-verse gang-vocals. The song "Modern Football" is an indictment of one time UEFA president Michel Platini and FIFA in general for turning the focus of *football* away from fans and the sport itself and towards a blind and bland money-generating machine. The EP wraps up with "Dark Times," a song most of us can relate to. *"Anxiety, depression beating me down / Can't see better days, almost in the edge / Paying the price and I can't stand it/ Really close to losing my mind."* Most of the Gang adheres to a daily regimen of 450mg of St. John's Wort cut with 5 grams of Zoloft chopped up *real* fine. "Dark Times" has a clean hollow guitar tone that immediately made me think of "Impending Doom" by TERRIBLE FEELINGS. Weird, but it's true. Exciting new band that has connections to just about every other band on Bigorna.

JENNY WOO – *Proud of Every Scar* LP/CD (Randale): Poster woman for Positive Oi! is back! The acoustic aspect of JENNY WOO's usual shtick is largely absent only occurring in four (one being TOM PETTY's "I Won't Back Down") out of thirteen songs making this album more akin to her work in BIRDS OF PREY, i.e. up-tempo pop-Oi! What is present in spades is the uplifting albeit vague message of rising above some sort of struggle. Take the song "Fight": *"No matter the odds / I will wage this war / I know what I'm fighting for / And they may try me again and again / I hold my head high and I march straight ahead..."* JENNY WOO might know what "war" she's "fighting," but we don't. Cuz she never says. This stuff reminds me of the time I was a counselor at a Unitarian summer camp. I bet JENNY WOO knows how to play Silent Football. I don't know. If you miss the Lilith Fair, or want to hear something that sounds like it was written for a car commercial aimed at millennials then grab up *Proud of Every Scar*. Mostly this makes me want to burn plastic or pour gasoline into a lake.

QUEENSBURY RULES – *Bristol Elite* CD (United Riot): Britannia still rules, ok! QUEENSBURY RULES' debut full-length is thirteen tracks of Union Jack flying patriotic British Oi! that could have been released back in '86. What shines on *Bristol Elite* is the song writing. There are three tracks that deal with past British military battles ("Dogfight," "Rorke's Drift," and "Return to Agincourt"). English history is an obvious influence for the band. Those songs juxtaposed against the tunes that deal with the struggles of the British working class ("Workers of Britain," "Betrayal," and "Bridge the Gap") present a grim reality. The album is filled out with songs of bravado and aggression. From the song "Bristol Elite": *"We scratch beneath the surface of the urban slum / Expose the trendy hipsters who go running to their mums / They all try to stop us but we're salt of the Earth / A shield wall armed with knowledge of heritage, our birth!"* Here's to QUEENSBURY RULES for keeping the populism in Oi! loud and proud. They are the Bristol elite. And if you try to stop them they'll knock you off your feet. Oi!

RIXE – *Les Nerfs a Vif* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus): Let's cut to the chase: They did it. RIXE's new EP is better than their previous effort, *Coups Et Blessures*. There was nothing wrong with *Coups Et Blessures*. It's just that *Les Nerfs a Vif* is even better. This doesn't even sound French to me anymore. This is in the same league as the impossible to top *Scenderemo Nelle Strade* EP by NABAT from '82. *Les Nerfs a Vif* has it all: constant simple drumming, blown-out guitar, bouncing bass, and barked vocals that are to the point. Lyrics to the band's anthem translated by Goog: *"All night, you feel alive / The reason is lost in the noise / Brawl! / The streets are drunken, violence free / The brawl broke out with no surprise."* You probably want this or already have it. Or you're a hater cuz everyone else wants this. Either way, this one goes down in the books as important. Also Wattie, the bassist, was in a Beyoncé video.

SWEET FUCK ALL – *Live by the Sword* CS (self-Released): Philadelphia strikes again! This time it's SWEET FUCK ALL stoking the fires of East Coast American Oi! Killer simplicity that belies real intelligence à la the TEMPLARS and FORCED REALITY. Take the opener, "Forth to War": *"Skinhead / it's a way of life, looking for a riot looking for a fight / skinhead / DM's on our feet / We wear braces to hold up our jeans / skinhead and nothing more / I believe in battle, I believe in war / Skinhead power and might / to be anti-social is my right!"* Then you get a song about the Cold War (with perfect clips of Crispin Glover from *River's Edge*) and the song "Dark Ages" using the fall of Alexandria as a metaphor for the current state of the world. *"'Why should we care?' the mob will surely cry / Dissolving efforts toward enlightenment / We once tried / The mob effectively brought an Age of Darkness / Is this what you want? / Well, you can't take it away from me / You can't burn it down."* The tape ends with "Mission Accomplished," a song about getting drunk and listening to Oi! Tops! Contact the band for a physical tape or boogie-board on the waves of the World Wide Web to sweetfaphilly.bandcamp.com and listen there. Rumor is the band has a full LP in the works for later this year. We say bully!

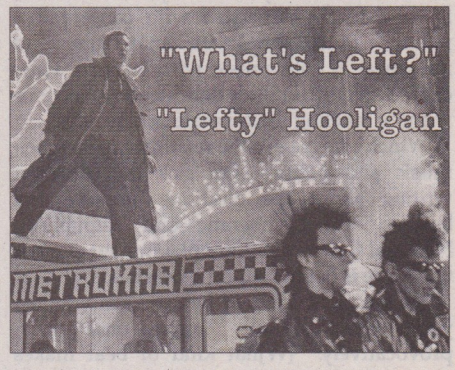
And that's gonna wrap it up. I didn't get to everything I wanted to this month, and I flat out cut a few other things becuz I didn't want to fill up the space with terrible stuff I didn't even enjoy. We'll get to the good releases (new THUG and NO TIME!!) next month and probably a few more bad things as well (probably German). Til then, shave your head!

ENDNOTES:

1) Got a problem? Contact tech support at: AmericanBootGang@gmail.com.

2) Here's to Lancaster PA's best in working-poor punk Matty and all the MID RATS!

3) I'm back working on TV shows and finally a proud member of IATSE Local 489. I met Denzel Washington and locked eyes with David Morse while he was getting a costume fitting. Weird times.



I attended a "Faces of Death" party in San Diego some time between 1980 and 1982. I don't remember the exact date as I was drinking heavily at the time, and some details are pretty much a blur from those days. "Faces of Death" was a film compilation of various explicit on-camera death scenes—half of them fake—which led to a movie series, and then a horror genre. I'd heard that Boyd Rice organized the party, not around a video showing but in honor of the suicide of Joy Division singer Ian Curtis. The living room had a shrine set up, with black and red altar cloths and lit tapered black candles featuring a framed picture of Ian alongside one of Adolf Hitler. Boyd hadn't yet transitioned into full-on racist fascism, so this was him being transgressive and oh-so-naughty. The soundtrack for the evening, besides Joy Division, included Throbbing Gristle, Boyd's band Non, Cabaret Voltaire, and others.

I found the whole party morose and boring, and left soon after arriving, no doubt in search of more alcohol. But all the future dark tribes, from industrial to goth, were present in embryo. I've told this story many times before. What brought it to mind now was Genesis P-Orridge posting on their FB page a slick conspiracy video-remastering of the hoax "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" using the Rothschild family. I'm FB friends with several anti-fascists, and the reaction was intense. One individual in particular, someone whom I'd been corresponding with back and forth since before FB when he was commenting on my political blog, stated that he was distressed over what Genesis had done because he really liked both Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV. In the FB exchange, I realized I harbored prejudices born of that experience some 35

years prior—that a *certain kind of music* invariably leads to fascism.

I should have known better. In my *Hit List* review of Craig O'Hara's book *The Philosophy of Punk* I'd argued against his idea that punk is inherently anarchist by contending that no type of politics is innate to punk as a genre of music. Aside from a visceral rebellion often characteristic of youth, it's really all just about sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. I also didn't learn from my about-face on country western music, when I came to appreciate Hank Williams Sr. and not to categorize the entire musical genre as "redneck." And yet, country western music is consistently associated with conservative politics, punk rock with anarchism, and industrial / goth music with fascism. How can we account for these persistent connections without labeling them innate or inherent?

Which brings us to the relationship between music and politics. I'm sick and tired of writing about the elections anyway and besides, the Democratic and Republican National Conventions are playing out even as this issue is being sold on newsstands.

"If the right kind of beat makes you tap your foot," Frank Zappa once said, provocatively. "[W]hat kind of beat makes you curl your fist and strike?" Zappa was ardently anti-censorship, so this bit of hyperbole was meant to highlight the complex relationship between music and other forms of human behavior, not to nail it down. However, I will attempt to do just that by mediating the links between music and politics through the lens of counterculture. Let's begin with the mother of all countercultures, the hippie counterculture. Forgive me if what follows is painted in broad strokes. The making of that counterculture, to paraphrase Theodore Roszak, involved the merging of a genre of music influenced by folk, blues and rock with various unconventional lifestyles from the Romantics, Bohemians and the Beats, all in opposition to the prevailing Establishment culture of the day. Rock music and bohemian hipster lifestyles overlapped, and the counterculture was born from their interaction on this common ground.

Characterizing the hippie counterculture as all about "peace and love" is simplistic but fair, even as it misses the communalism underlying that social movement. Plenty of hippies like Stewart Brand had a philosophical hankering for capitalist libertarianism, and many others went on to become successful entrepreneurs. But the '60s were all about communalism—about crash pads, coops and communes—and as such the counterculture countered competitive American individualism. Hippie communalism was central to a naïve back-to-the-land movement, which laid the basis for today's concerns with vegetarianism and organic agriculture. This conscious collectivism accounts for the incipient anarcho-leftism of much of the hippie counterculture, and it also explains the New Age fascism evident in other aspects. And to call the politics of the hippies collectivist is vague at best.

The '60s counterculture encompassed millions of young people around the world and by the Death of Hippie (dated 1967, 1968 or 1969, depending) there were already inklings of a smaller counter-counterculture in the making. Proto-punk music was emerging, and there was a growing disdain for the hippie "peace and love" mentality as too idealistic and impractical. Anger and aggression replaced those hippie sentiments—expressed in sayings like "search and destroy" and "fuck shit up"—and hippie communalism mutated into punk collectivism (squats, punk houses, venue collectives, etc.). DIY became the byword of punk action and the whole package, while not explicitly anarchist, tended toward the politically anarchic.

Also in reaction to the hippie counterculture, but somewhat later in time and still smaller in numbers, the industrial / goth / dark counter-counterculture took shape. There were distinct types of music and kinds of collectivism (Throbbing Gristle came out of the COUM Transmissions art collective and Laibach is part of the NSK art collective), but the doom and gloom of this scene was augmented by an intense obsession with all that is transgressive. And my argument paralleling punk rock is that while there was nothing in the industrial / goth / dark music scene that was inherently fascist, the fascination with being "oh so naughty" and transgressive also accounts for the tendency toward fascist imagery and even politics in the music.

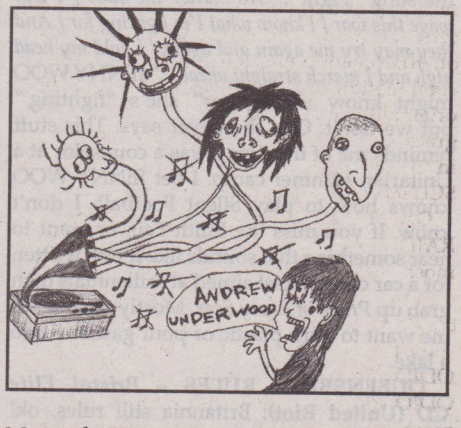
This oversimple history is not prescriptive, but descriptive. I'm trying to explain political trends without arguing that certain politics are innate to certain musical genres. Hippie peace and love was far different from punk anger and aggression or industrial / goth doom and gloom. But, apart from youthful rebellion and a desire to *épater la bourgeoisie*, these countercultures and counter-countercultures had at least three things in common: communal structures, DIY motivations, and transgressive impulses. Hippie communalism was intensely DIY, with the *Whole Earth Catalog* epitomizing the era. But hippie transgression was unashamedly hedonistic. I would contend that this counterculture went the furthest toward parrying the prevailing culture and creating a viable, wholistic alternative society that escaped simple left-or-right politics. In reacting against *bourgeois* society *and* the hippie counterculture, punk and industrial / goth further narrowed their respective cultural arenas, and further fragmented the wider society into numerous contending, jostling subcultures. Punk was violently transgressive, but its DIY emphasis was central, implying anarchistic politics. And industrial / goth was as DIY as punk, but it was the fascination with transgressive naughtiness that accounts for that counter-counterculture's infatuation with fascist symbolism, which often spilled over into actual fascism.

Of course, it can be argued that whether it's culture, counterculture, or counter-counterculture, the Western context for all of this is *bourgeois* individualism. From the libertinism and "do your own thing" of the 60s, the emphasis has been on the individual through punk and industrial / goth, various forms of communalism notwithstanding. Even to say that "it's only rock and roll" is to acknowledge the primacy of this socio-political context for the cultural rebellions from the '60s onward.

I published an anarcho-punk zine called *San Diego's Daily Impulse* from 1985 through 1989, which I distributed free at shows and to record stores. As part of that zine, I and a small group of friends put on an Anarchy Picnic in May, 1985. Several hundred people gathered to share food and beverage, acoustic music, and activities like frisbee and hacky-sack around literature tables, chalk, and sheets of butcher paper sprinkled with crayons and paint in Balboa Park. It was clear at the Anarchy Picnic that divisions like hippie, punk and goth were ephemeral, that tastes in music and fashion were not rigid, and that people mixed-and-matched scenes and countercultures as they desired. In the midst of this sunny picnic, with all the fun and frivolity, a couple strolled into the park wearing full Nazi Sturmabteilung uniforms, complete with prominent swastika armbands. The man was an SA-Gruppenführer, the woman his she-wolf of the SA, and together they walked a pair of Dobermans. They feigned being haughty and aloof, but it was clear that they pranced and preened over being so naughty and transgressive in their Nazi regalia.

No surprise, the Anarchy Picnickers ignored them.

gamatiasz.wordpress.com
leftyhooligan.wordpress.com



Mega thanks and congratulations to the organizers of this year's Manic Relapse festival! Thanks to a ton of hard work before the event and behind the scenes, three days packed with gigs featuring bands from seven different countries went off without a hitch worth noting. What is worth noting is the fact that hundreds of dekt and rowdy punxs, most of them swimming in booze, managed

to get through the weekend's events without a fight or even a scuffle that I'm aware of. That's just lovely.

Of course, the most important aspect of the (long) weekend was the bands, and there were an absolute ton of memorable performances. For myself and a gang of rowdy San Francisco punx and out of town visitors, the weekend really kicked off with a surprisingly hype Monday night 21+ gig at the Mission's Knockout featuring VIOLENCE, FRANKY, and PMS 84, all of whom would perform again before the week was out. While all were impressive at their second performances as well, this was a nice intimate gig with high-energy performances by every band (can't say enough about how much I love FRANKY's "fuck you fuck you fuck you" stage banter). Beer flowed like water, grown-ass adults pogoed like crazy, and rudimentary punk was played (sadly at only moderate volume due to the Knockout on a weeknight being kind of lame). That being said, every band still killed, from VIOLENCE's shambolic UK82 attack (DISORDER reincarnated in the Bay) to FRANKY's Kyushu '80-fuck you worship to PMS 84's bass-driven UK82 perfection. (They beat PROXY at their own game, I swear. Saw both bands on the same stage and PMS 84 did it better!)

I missed the LOS MONJO/RULETA RUSA gig at Knockout on the following Thursday because I am an old man with a wife and kid and sometimes shit happens when that's your life, but still managed to catch every band I needed to in the days following.

Without any further tedious breakdowns of Friday and Saturday's 24-plus hours of punk, here are the highlights: SCUMRAID were the superstars of the fest, playing two absolutely devastating sets of frenetic crasher crust that was somehow even better than their recorded material (especially their Saturday set!). It is hard (very, very hard in fact) to pull off that chaotic crasher crust sound with a combination of authenticity to the style and originality and SCUMRAID pulled it off with grace and style. I never got to see GLOOM in '93, but at least I can tell the kids I saw SCUMRAID in '16 and it was fucking great.

GASMASK TERROR and NAPALM RAID deserve a joint award for being the most tight, well-oiled machine bands of the fest, delivering very distinct D-beat based styles with incredible tightness and complete confidence. Of all the local bands, ODIO and ISOTOPE had the strongest sets, ODIO lording it over a roiling sing-along mosh while ISOTOPE commanded the big stage of the Oakland Metro with authority. (As an aside, other than when I saw Chuck from ISOTOPE onstage, every time I saw him over the weekend he was hauling something heavy, running to put out a fire or otherwise working his ass off. Most Valuable Punk of the weekend? Probably.)

I think MUTANT ITCH are finally getting the credit that they deserve, as their set saw a packed house with tons of sing-alongs, striking a killer balance as always between goofy pogo and aggressive crust. Keep an eye out for a new flexi in the works! Also, MUTANT ITCH members-of band STARK MOON have improved tremendously and played a killer set of SACRILEGE/late '80s-style crust to kick off the fest proper.

It's hard to admit when you've been completely wrong, but I have previously written off the ICONOCLAST reunion sets and they absolutely proved me wrong with their headlining set on Friday night. They picked a killer set list, played it fast and tight, and in my opinion probably had the best set of any of the old-school bands that performed at the fest in terms of energy and commitment. West Coast heads are definitely advised to go see them, East Coast heads are advised to book a tour.

LOS MONJO: amazing. I keep saying that they are the best traditional punk band in the world. When my head clears there may be another one or two that could contest that claim on record, but seeing them in a backyard with flares going off and kids freaking the fuck out grabbing everybody and each other and dancing like they'd lost their minds and the band somehow keeping their shit together and playing the songs in a way that made it seem like the interruptions and knockdowns were all part of the show throughout...well, they're pretty fuckin' punk. Like, for the ages, PISTOLS kinda punk.

Best new recordings I encountered at the fest? A handful of tapes and one CD that I am remiss in writing about. VIOLENCE *Noise and Control* demo, STARK MOON *Demo 2016*, FRANKY *Noise and Melody* demo, SCUMRAID *USA Tour Tape 2016* (fucking blazing, better than the last 7" material for sure), *You'll Never Own Me* (comp tape from the Dark Raids label with a ton of killer noise and noisy crust bands, pick it the fuck up if you see it!), and finally: *Noise Circus 2*, a CD that JO2 from EXIT HIPPIES put together in the wake of the seemingly unrelated *Noise Circus* EP from several years ago. This disc is a really fucking jaw-dropping collection of tracks from bands you knew were good (EXIT HIPPIES, LOTUS FUCKER, MUTANT ITCH, FILTHY HATE), bands you've never heard of (DODA FRAMTIDEN, S.C.S.) and bands you had no idea were still around (BANISH ARMS (!!!), whose live tracks are a fascinating mix of traditional Japanese hardcore, classic rock-style riffing, and crazed breakdowns. It's an incredible comeback from a band that's known, if at all, from a handful of 20-year-old compilation tracks). The CD is on EXIT HIPPIES' New Smell label and it seems to be hanging around still so grab a copy while you still can or cry forever.

On a related and final, note: France's Kick Rock Records have pressed the YOSHIHIRO HIRAKO & HUMAN ARTS *Shogakara Taigae* CD to vinyl in very limited quantities. This is a fucking amazing record that combines pop/punk melodies with DEATH SIDE-style Japanese hardcore (Chelsea plays on this record, and anybody who knows their shit will tell you that "Humanism" is maybe the best song DEATH SIDE never wrote). It will probably be sold out by the time you read this, and it will certainly be sold out by the time I can write about it, so just know that if you are holding this mag and you want that record, drop it, and buy one right fuckin' now.

Next month I'll make it up to Nori by reviewing both the new Pogo 77 releases as well as some other ridiculous bullshit!

I'm spending loud afternoons with Confuse's *Stupid Life*. This record documents a crystal clear state of absurdity. The structure-less edifice of primitive, estranged, marvelous, and violent ideas is unshakebale. On the other hand what's happening inside of this solid creation is bouncing, from wall to wall like a madman trying to scratch a pigeonhole into the wall of a rubber room. Here the outside world is exchanged for a collapsing sound; a collection of caveman beats, flexing metal-esque riffs within the mental stability of a bad trip, haunted vocals howling cues with madness. The power play with the pace creates a tension in this claustrophobic place that is flooded with noise, which imitates the battle chant of nuclear bombs hitting capital cities.

Still the best thing in this 7" is that it throws a camouflage on many features of the record. It works because the focus here is pointed on the total confusion of existence which could rarely be a minimalist scene. It does not present all the components of this crazy mix on a silver plate, so my work is to dip in deep into this pool of sonic chaos to find whatever I prefer to hear. If there's anything. Oh yes, there is! From a distance it could sound like an over-leveled clash of feedback but then the onion strips off its layers and within the crushing elements of the record I find beautiful terror. It makes me get involved and what else do we need from art in this lonely being?

What's great in their reckless courage—which could be exchanged for the lack of available studio(time)/money/dedication to care—is that it combines perfectly what Confuse's music is about with how it has been recorded. In an interview, This Heat said that even their recording space functioned as an instrument. This statement revealed to me the possibility of leaving beyond the auto-

limitation of my understanding of records with spending too much focus only on riffs and the way that they were recorded. It made me re-evaluate the success of a good record.

I started to drop such theories of how a record could have been better. A record is a documentation of a state and time, it is a finished creation. If a band has recorded themselves in a weird, failed, perfect way, then that's their statement. Whatever the result is, it tells something about the band. I will not care if it's the quality of dubbing or the amount of effects that makes Rappesaglia's record this great. If more attempts would butcher the raw enthusiasm of Kaaos' records, how a human drummer would affect the sound of Mopo Mogo and Spiny Norman, if it's the relentless rage of the guitars on Kina's first records or it's the sizzling quality of the tape they used for recording or what happened with the second Blitz LP without MDMA. Whether what I believe to be the creativity of the guitars and equipment or it's just the background noise of the recording format someone used, after all, it's what could be heard. It does not mean that I do not will to work with a record but if someone leaves out the bass line then I will not pretend to envision how else could it have sounded. I listen to what is recorded, not to released drafts of utopist best records. I believe in band's consciousness either practiced or not and what is left out is always just as important or even more important than what was included. This is more of a valid approach now than it could have been before even a decade ago since recently the possibility of self-documenting has expanded in variety and to an accessible level where everything is possible.

Nowadays I enjoy those records that consciously were made for studio recordings like the Flux of Pink Indians avant-garde destruction or power electronics records that tell stories and are full with ideas that could not be executed in real time and space unlike the sheer capturing of raw power on 8-tracks.

What I really despise are record reviews that mention bands being great live and forgetting that the subject here is not bands but the result of their attempt to archive their music AKA records. As discussed before, these two could differ. So as much as I can't care now how bands played live 30 years ago, neither do I care about local bands being amazing a thousand miles away from me or even on YouTube if they are just whatever on records. Bands should state something with their records, be it whatever they want. If their statement is we care about live shows and not about our legacy, that's a valid statement as well, but records should have features and ideas, not rules and adequacy.

Recently I was hugely influenced by the agenda of *Not Shit* skate-for-fun zine and I have started to think about how skateboarding has changed into a stunt act in which skaters go for neck breaking tricks that look good on video but do not tell anything about the fun side of thrashing. I bet it's an intoxicating feeling to fly down fifteen stairs, but without the adrenaline rushing possibility of breaking bones would it still be considered a great trick? What about the beauty of style, the brain in creativity, and the fun of fucking around in a corner curb of parking lots, the joy of losing yourself in nonsense tricks, landing on grass, and laughing? *Not Shit* states the obvious: if you like it, then do it and do not care about any peer pressure.

Comparing punk to skating, I realized that the idea of doing it for fun instead of being frightened by any type of jury crowd should liberate anyone to play shows and record music, to be bold enough to not care about making mistakes in the name of self-entertainment. In the name of forcing one's idea into legacy given by a document that is a record. It should be perfect for the standards of those who are recording it, not for those who will consume it. Consumer rock always confuses me. I am always amazed by the fact that Keith Richards still cares to go up on stage after so many years to perform his stupid songs without making mistakes. His act is also a stunt: it's interesting because there is so much at stake, his whole reputation spent as an exploiter of Black music. Professional rock should be really stressful while punx should not care about picking wrong notes but focus on the fun possibility of shredding in front of a crowd. Even if they realize the mistakes, they are not taken as seriously as by pro-rock fans.

Forced compliance slaughters good music on bad records. Without an independent idea of how to record songs, bands will fail. It shouldn't matter that much if not everything can be heard clearly if the actual sound in whole is what they desire. Bands should not be scared to have ideas in music that might be challenging but have no established form to fulfill, no template for the sake of satisfying the taste-requirements of so-called opinion makers.

The Pig DNA record has a sticker on it that says '"Understand Discharge." Without writing another thinkpiece on the importance and greatness of Discharge, I would like to state two things: one of their record covers has a cabbage, and we should try to understand bands beyond Discharge, too. Or even more, feel them. The best records are not only the collection of songs, but a complex story of their players, their environment—a time in history. I'm still talking about punk records since they are just like wax—could be easily formed if they encounter enough heat. Without any bonds to authorities who would approve a band's sound, punk could be an instant reflection on whatever is happening with the players so the best music should be aptly balanced out between being local and global. But first and foremost records should be great. Fucked up, crashing, fun, and beautiful.

OBITUARY

MARLENE MARDER
1954–2016

Probably the most disappointing interview I have ever done was with the great Marlene Marder (of KLEENEX / LiLiPUT) for *Maximum Rocknroll*. I haven't read it in years but I remember her attitude being something between "who cares?" and cracking a joke about working as a mail carrier so she was yes, a real "post punk"...OK. I felt kinda in awe of what a teenage rebel smartass she still was, and kinda annoyed. Like Marlene, you're all we've got for eking out a history I know is there and not re-massaged by questionably radical grandpa-boys and dad-shorts-wearing glory seekers. You were a guitar-shredding dyke and successfully ignored that point save for the fun it proposes.

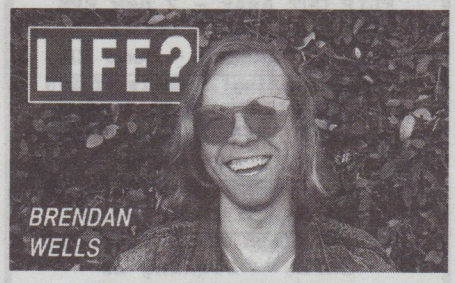
Marlene was this path forward—decades ahead of her time in something that felt like living the future: what were you going to do when it was finally totally normal for lesbians to wear white jumpsuits and noodle away riffs on strats? You were going to have fun, and she was this face in the distance living and playing how I wanted to. She was Highly Evolved. This was really important to grasp in the context of my mom's generation, which had very heavy and sobering battle scars from the AIDS crisis that had understandably traded some of the party for the right to live. Did Marlene sense she was the living painting of fun and freedom and yes, in a *great* band to boot? (This latter point is important because they dared to go beyond the hobby single and become one of the few visions of aesthetic and sound—yes, even a boxset.) I couldn't tell honestly.

Fortunately we kept in touch on email for a good couple years and I can't remember if the interesting bits I know about her are from these brief notes or the original crap interview I did. Brilliant Colors went on an extremely brief and by the seat of our pants tour of Europe after our first LP and played that amazing giant squat in Zurich. I had a red spots-seeing fever haze illness when someone came up to the communal kitchen—"Is Jess here? Marlene Marder is here to see you." It was soooooo, sooooooooo exciting. Like my Dylan from the Alps. There she was, wearing a Brillian Colors pin *no less!!* Teen dreams beyond teens.

The language barrier made our hangout somewhat broken up but after a beer we noticed the boys who threw the gig were staring and talking about us. One ventured up and asked, *"How?!?* Did you know Marlene??" Marlene put her arm around me and said, "This is baby punk and I am mama punk!" Literally. They put on some Kleenex records and watched her from the corner. I remember this because I couldn't believe it

was me introducing the Swiss icon to the Swiss punks and not the other way around? I don't know how involved she was but she was still admired. I played kind of terribly that night because I was nervous and ill...I remember the woman she arrived with leaving at that point and leaving us to hangout, which was very cool. Marlene proceeded to tell me my stage presence was lame and weak and brushed off my attempts to talk about Patti Smith. I was stoked though and did cut the shy shit after that. I don't know if it's sad or amazing that Marlene is still my picture of the future where fun is freedom, but this is my big rock'n'roll star who left this year.

— Jess Scott



Despite the level of posturing that exists for almost all of us social punks trying our to look cool and be cool, it's surprising we also throw around "cool guy" as a derogatory term. For me, a big part of getting interested in punk was about looking at it all and thinking "Wow, that's cool." Just looking at the first Ramones album still makes me feel that way. The easy and natural look of tight pants, ratty t-shirts, and nonchalance of dopey expressions. Since then I've worked my ass off to be natural, or at least to look the part. Despite my love of cool shit, there's always the distasteful side of things. Cool can be equated with being dismissive and full of yourself. Qualities I don't like. Too cool for school. So you can look cool, but you better not *be* cool.

Maybe I feel this way because I've always hung out with dorks. To me, a dork is anyone active in pursuing their interests. I think that's admirable in a social culture that can run on the veneer of apathy and defending yourself with indifference. To actually show interest in something is encouraging. Just about anyone who cares about punk and puts their time into it is a dork, I think. The volunteers at *MRR* and Extreme Noise are mostly dorks (hopefully ones that are okay with being called dorks in the pages of a magazine). Who else is going to care about this stuff enough to donate their time and energy to it? Be a dork and be proud of it. Being a dork doesn't mean you have to feel like an outsider in your own club, but I guess that baggage can stick with you when you graduate from collecting Star Wars action figures to collecting records.

But when you go to a show and you feel self-conscious about the social aspects of a culture that you love everything else about, you can feel like the outsider among outsiders. Loving punk but not feeling like a punk, maybe. When I've felt like the people around me don't have an interest in me or judge me because I'm not a decked out punk, the line in the sand is drawn: fuck the cool kids. A lot of people I know have voiced this to me too, especially people who don't feel valued in a community because they're not in a band, not someone people want to walk up to and congratulate.

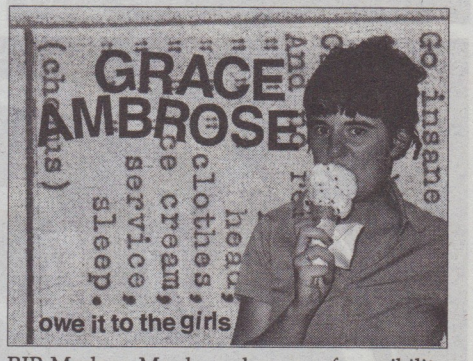
And so we pursue our interests, do our own thing, and say "Fuck the cool kids." Unbeknownst to some dorks, while we've been pursuing our interests of acquiring knowledge about obscure music and starting bands influenced by our interests, everything has blown up in our faces and we've become cool by accident. "I'm not cool, I swear!" I'm amazed how often I've heard people attempt to defend themselves like this. I've done it. But how could I be cool when I view myself as a total wiener? Do I need to show you my ELO records to prove myself?

Cool is someone else, someone who rides a motorcycle and breaks bottles and you assume gets laid all the time like its nothing while you debate whether you have enough confidence to respond to a Tinder match with someone who is probably a spam account anyway. And confidence really is the name of the game. Someone is cool who is confident, like a picture of Lou Reed frowning and wearing big sunglasses, not Lou Reed in the bathroom worried about his acne. Confidence is what would completely nullify this conversation to begin with. Why would you be concerned about other people being cool if it didn't threaten your existence in some kind of way; if it didn't make it feel like they were above you, better than you, or different from you in some way that would make you inferior by comparison? But lucky for me this column can continue on because self-consciousness feels like a universal truth, something nobody is free from.

That self-consciousness leads most of us to think we can't be cool. We're not as interesting, not as engaging, not as well-adjusted as people who seem to be better off with the social side of punk. But you've been stuffing social capital under your mattress with your eyes closed, forgetting the fact that when you've seen someone at a show, they've seen you. As unimportant or unpopular as you think you are, you still exist. If you've played in a band, if you've booked a band, if you've been seen seeing a band, if you've been caught wearing a band's button at the grocery store, you're fucked, man. You've committed the cardinal sin. Someone may think you're cool.

How did this happen? How did being a dork somehow get you shoved in through the back door of the Cool Kid Club? And now you're standing in the middle of the room and everyone's staring at you. It can feel good when someone you don't know actually likes your band or buys your record or says hello to you because you look familiar. What I've also seen is people turning away from the cool, shirking the responsibilities of the cool. Maybe its just something that makes you uncomfortable, like someone loves your band and you don't know how to deal with that, so you make weird dismissive jokes and look like an asshole and become the wrong kind of cool. Maybe the situation is something a little more serious. Maybe you've been booking bands with shitty members and you finally got called out for it. "What can I do to change things? I'm not cool!"

At some point you have to recognize that people are paying attention to you and that your actions have consequences. Even if you're a little wiener, you're still cool. So recognize it and own up to it. You don't have the power to right all the world's wrongs, but I'm a strong believer that you're the change in the world—if you're a wiener and not willing to accept that you're any more than a wiener, the world is going to reflect that and we'll be living in a wienery world. If you aren't shitty, the world won't be quite as shitty. You don't have to be the Christ and Savior to punk , but we can at least be role models to the people watching us. We can recognize that we each contribute in a small way to our communities, individual small communities that make up something larger that doesn't have to add up to a shit show. Where is your social capital best invested? My punk points have to be good for something besides getting hooked up with free pizza sometimes.



RIP Marlene Marder, a beacon of possibility since the first time I heard Kleenex as a budding teen freak. One of the most inventive and iconic guitarists ever! I sang in a Kleenex cover band once and I remember how maddening practice was—their tunes were so simple yet impossible to truly emulate, almost mocking us as we went round and round in circles trying to keep up. Now that men have learned that comparing women to Bikini Kill reveals their "all women sound same" bias, my friend Colette jokes that they've started pointing to Kleenex instead, for when they wanna show that they're down for something a bit freakier. We can all only dream. They are a totally singular and inimitable group, the most inspirational blend of out of time and perfectly pop, my first favorite girl band and still one of my favorite bands (no modifier needed) of all time. They had it all—"feminist glee," a killer look, unbeatable tunes. A persistent reminder of the fact that there is no right way to play. Thanks to Marlene for it all.

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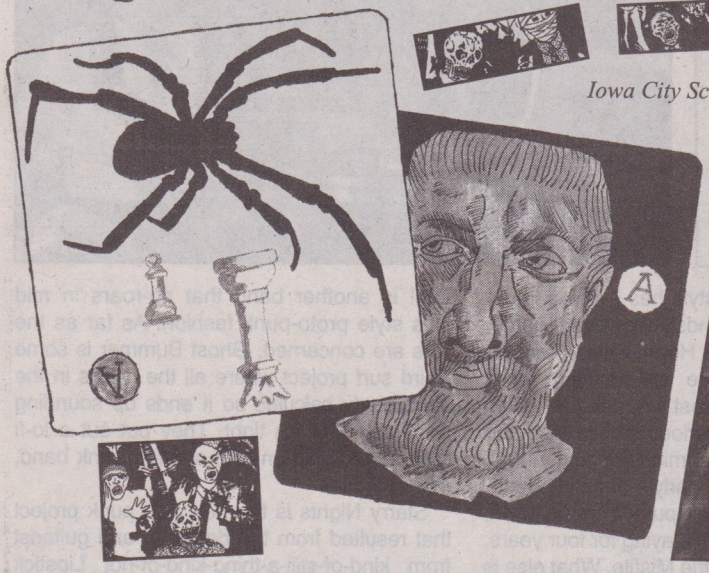
IOWA CITY SCENE REPORT



Iowa City Scene Report by Paul Osgerby. Photos by Jordan Gale and Zak Neumann. Flyers by Joe Milik and Brady Wülf. Title and art by Joe Heuermann.

BIG BOX

For most people in Iowa City, any given Tuesday night is a rather sleepy one. In fact, most weekday nights can seem like that. But under a 3D glasses-hued basement, Lard Boys from Minneapolis rolled through town on a Tuesday this past April, playing their ubiquitous doo-tat doo-tat style of hardcore punk (no, they don't use chorus pedals) to the room brimmed with people. Maybe on weekday nights roughly 100 people will attend creative events, but house shows seem to entice a healthy percentage. The weekends tend to fill out even more.

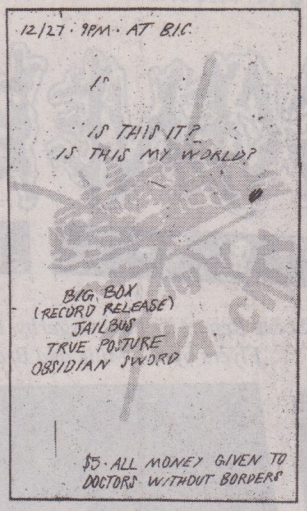
TRUE COMMANDO

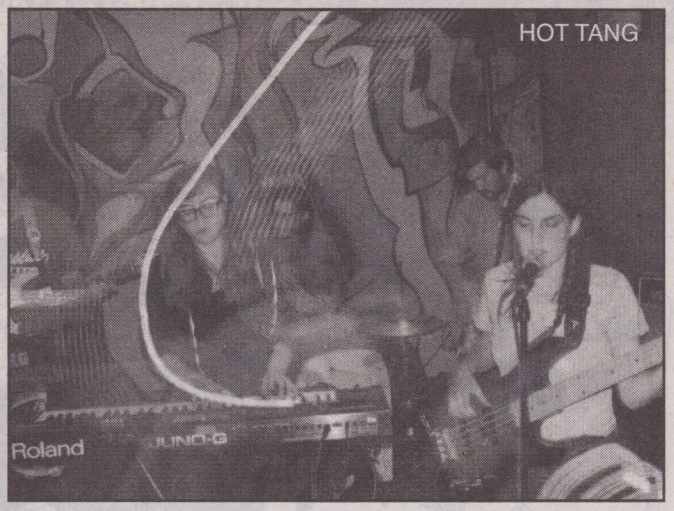
Despite what appears to be a finicky reputation with this town, some of the best contemporary hardcore bands were all put up in house shows just this past year—Puberty Wounds finally accomplished their mission here to play all 50 states. Little ole Iowa City is something like the great gig in the sty for me. An Australian travel guide, which will not be named, claims that instead of two girls for every boy (like gender ratios really fucking matter), Iowa has eight pigs for every person. But this forty-or-so-odd-thousand person town, without the university students, is much more than a stop with convenient geography in Smalltown, Flyover Country.

There was a dry spell in available houses for a couple years, where we only had two houses at a time to carry the weight of shows. College towns can be so fickle. Since last August, when everyone's leases turn over, those of us who book shows can almost entirely eschew commercial spaces; for that hiatus of houses we had to rely on bars like Gabe's Oasis or The Mill, or the vegan restaurant, Trumpet Blossom (though they're all friendly enough to punks).

Scene staples Dick's Jiggly Room (some might know it from the past as American Pimps HQ) has been putting up shows for just shy a decade now, while the Breast Imaging Center (name taken due to its proximity to the hospital's wing of the same name) has been around on and off for nearly five years. They consistently host some of the wildest punk shows every month. There's another house that just opened up this year, the Flex Zone. Those dudes will open up their cellar doors every other month or so. There's a spot just outside the downtown nexus (and it's really where everyone's lives revolve around), Goon Hotel, which runs more on the freaky folk vibe. It's also not uncommon for one-offs to go down in living rooms or basements around town.

Then there's Governor's Mansion,





cannibalized from an old venue, Dog Mansion, at a new address. Shitty landlords plus too many shows blew up that spot for cops. That house is such an enigma to me, almost sinister. It has a huge basement with an almost wraparound stage from the remnants of what appears to be an unfinished master bathroom project. They also host rotating galleries from local visual artists. They put on anything from pop punk to harsh noise to techno to folk stuff, and there's always high attendance with people donating money. Naturally, the larger shows go down there; the official headcount tallied at 360 people for a Bernie Sanders support show before the caucus. The Mansion throws multiple shows a week and is a quasi-entry point to the weirdo scene, which corrupts the new crop (of mostly students) whom might be predisposed freaks. Somehow party patrol has only given the house one warning.

Maybe house shows are just parties, which is why college towns usually have some sort of house show culture to them, but it's not some shit where people just hang around in the backyard so they don't have to cough up the cash and "can hear the bands from out here." Plus, all the houses are outfitted with Square readers—it's the 21st century after all. At least there's also a generative purpose to people attending these performances, not just debauchery.

The bands that likely put Iowa City on in touring bands' Google Maps near the turn of the decade are deceased. Solid Attitude incrementally packed it in, heading north to Minneapolis. Most members of NERV, Supersonic Piss, Slut River, Big Box, Goldendust, etc. etc. are sprinkled across the country now. Those who stuck around have gone on to continue or start ripping new bands or projects. GRAVE POSTURE still rasps some of the best noise in town, but goes by Government Mind Kontrol (GMK). Joe's work ranges from gothy power-electronics to industrial techno to face-melting spoken word. He's also behind a lot of collaborative sets. Alex Body is still boogying the booties of this town around, but his style has evolved into a more interpretive soundscape—avant-garde, like Star Wars: A New Hope. Scene senseis Acoustic Guillotine are still melting faces with some of the heaviest tunes in town. Just drums and bass and serious groove. Aseethe also drones out some mind-warping doom, and have done so for nearly a decade now.

Undoubtedly the best punk band in town, Conetrauma have been slaying for four years. They're as badass as the Misfits. What else is there to say? The original duo hates it. But the truth is out there; these three ladies whoop. One of these days, after sitting on recordings for over two years, their record will come out on Bloated Kat and Lorax Records. Two members of Conetrauma lay down the rhythm for another hardcore punk band: Jailbus. This is the band in town that plays too often, but they're made (in)famous by beating a cover of the Nubs to death (you know which song). They'll have a 7" out within the next year. Jokergas is the under-a-minute-punk culmination of the Savage Young Taterbug's hobbyhorse with Batman. But the band holds nothing back with speed and punch. They covered Gary Glitter. For real. I place these three bands in prestigious company because they perform without count-offs.

Juicy '66 was the first band that got itself together a little over a year ago to kick off a new wave of hardcore punk in town. It's choppy. Skittish. It feels loosely held together by duct tape, yet that's what holds the universe together anyways. Their name is taken from the license plate of an elusive hotrod spotted zipping around town. Pepper shares two members with, and is almost the antithesis to, Juicy '66. This is the type of hardcore which makes you slam wall-to-wall at some deranged mid-tempos for the entirety of their fifteen minute set. I've made the band aware a shitty Sublime wannabe band already existed with that name in the '90s.

For all the corporate rockers, there's DDT LLC, which plays at the pace that someone with a slicked pompadour and collared shirt would. It's definitely got rock'n'roll swagger. Zuul is another band that rip-roars in mid '70s style proto-punk fashion. As far as the '70s are concerned, Ghost Bummer is some weird surf project where all the brains in the band study calculus so it ends up sounding like Rush. But it's tight. They put out a lo-fi split concept album with another punk band, Inbred Trash.

Starry Nights is the new pop punk project that resulted from the drummer and guitarist from kind-of-still-a-thing-kind-of-not Lipstick Homicide. Maiden Mars is another band in the poppy vein, and it's really hard not to say they sound like Hole, but…the ladies in this band make some of the best throwback music. They're currently recording at Flat Black Studio for an upcoming split and full-length.

As far as metal, Obsidian Sword is a band that lives up to its name. Each song is a war cry, and they wear face paint to back it up. They're writing a twenty minute movement which will appear on an upcoming 12" split with Aseethe. It will replace their current two-song set. For real Sunn O))) fans only.

The first house show I went to in Iowa City was highlighted by one of only two legendary performances by Link Hardon—his second performance might've been the sexiest noise performance in Iowa City history. John mostly performs as True Commando now, where he mutilates exhumed reggae tapes, singing and dancing like a true rudeboy over the top. Apparently he's going to start some nasty power-electronics as the Glock soon. As far as other harsh noise in this town, Phosphenes kills it with his analog synth set-up which rivals the Pantheon. It drones you out just as much as that overly extensive collection of "classics" literature would. That's a compliment. K0 is some noise from another universe far left from this universe. I think she calls upon the spirits of the forest because she brings a trap set out to the park and slaps the skins out in the woods to write her music. Some Iowa City youngbloods are also starting new projects, like Kentucky Meat Shower and Sex Tyrant.

There's a whole realm of indie/folk punk

shit I'm pretty distanced from. I need to get out of the four-block radius from my home more often. Some names I frequently hear about are Dino Spumoni and Hot Tang. There's also some wicked electronic music coming from producers Cuticle (who used to perform as part of the duo Ginseng) and Albert Does. If there are projects I'm forgetting, as I'm sure there are, my bad! It's hard to keep all these sub-scenes straight in my mind, but it's great that all of the scenes are coming together more and more frequently.

There are plenty of zines floating around town these days. They aren't strictly "punk" or cover "punk politics." In fact, a lot of them are lit-based, featuring the written works or visual art from many people involved in the DIY scene here—just expressing themselves in different mediums. There is a new periodical(ish?) zine, Garbage People, and some others focused on deviant writing, like Agitprop. There are also some great comics floating around, such as Cryptopsychomania and Despot. On another note, one of shameless self-promotion, I'm putting together a compilation of some of my favorite DIY bands and projects out of Iowa City. If you perhaps fancy a copy, get at me: mrpaulosgerby@themostpopulardomain.com.

As with many college towns, I'm sure, the exodus sets in around May. People slowly filter out—Iowa City is basically a pipeline to Chicago and Minneapolis—through the summer months. But whatever. Come August, the rebuilding begins. New people move to town, eventually meeting others involved or aware of the DIY scene. Even though the town is small, there's myriad talented people with chops starting new projects every month. But outsiders hardly hear of them because only a handful of people get the chance to tour—an even smaller number of bands can burst out of the Midwest bubble.

So if Iowa City is on your itinerary, you can come get a drink at everyone's favorite dive bar, Dave's Foxhead. If you're vegan/vegetarian (or if you're not), someone will take you to the local falafel joint—Oasis is cheap and has some of the best pita sandwiches you'll have. If you get into town at a reasonable hour and it's warm out, someone can take you to the Coralville Reservoir, which is my favorite thing about this town. Stay punk. Brush your teeth.

Current Iowa City Sounds:

Acoustic Guillotine:
acousticguillotine.bandcamp.com
Aseethe:
aseethe.bandcamp.com
ConeTrauma:
conetrauma.bandcamp.com
Ghost Bummer:
ghostbummer.bandcamp.com
Hot Tang:
hottang.bandcamp.com
Jailbus:
jailbus.bandcamp.com
K0:
k0music.bandcamp.com
Lipstick Homicide:
lipstickhomicide.bandcamp.com
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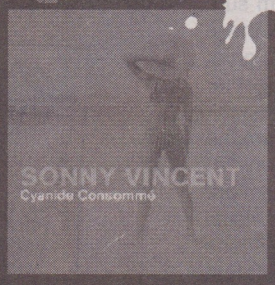

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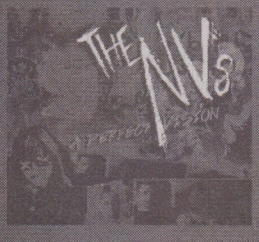
"Featuring Bobby Hussy from the Hussy, stoned, garage, fuzzed out, punk, rock!"



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Living in the Bay Area is a very privileged thing for a couple of reasons: great weather all year long, pretty nature everywhere, easy access to awesome vegan food, and great bands popping up and playing all the time. (There's also MRR HQ with free pizza and beer every new issue day, cheers for that!) One of the sickest bands around is Tørsö, not only because they're chill dudes/dudettes, but because they all shred at their instruments, creating a solid sound since day one. Guitarist Keith used to play in the almighty Punch, bass player Jasmine in Neighborhood Brats (and tons of other Bay bands), drummer Giacomo in Holy (from Italy), and singer Ethan in the short-lived but no less powerful Ritual Control. These guys know what they're doing and know what they want. Check out their European dates if you're in the old continent!

Intro by Juliana Almeida. Questions by Juliana Almeida and Lydia Athanasopoulous. Photos by Angela Owens.

TØRSÖ

MRR: You guys started in October 2013 and already toured Australia, Europe, and some parts of the USA, which is awesome for a band that young. How did it happen?

Jasmine: Our initial European tour came about because Keith's other band and my other band were meant to tour Europe in the summer. Giacomo was still living in Italy, so we figured we would just have to buy a ticket for Ethan.

Keith: Unfortunately, neither of the tours panned out, so we extended the tour to be a month instead of two weeks to help cover the cost of the tickets and play more shows in Europe. We continue to tour because we are motivated to travel and spend time together. It's perhaps somewhat less challenging for us, since we've worked hard over the many years that we've been involved with the scene to establish meaningful relationships with individuals all over the world.

MRR: Tell us some things that made a good impression on you on these tours and some things that made a negative impression on you.

Giacomo: One of the greatest aspects of being on tour is making new friends and experiencing a cultural exchange. Sampling vegan food all over the world is also a huge bonus!

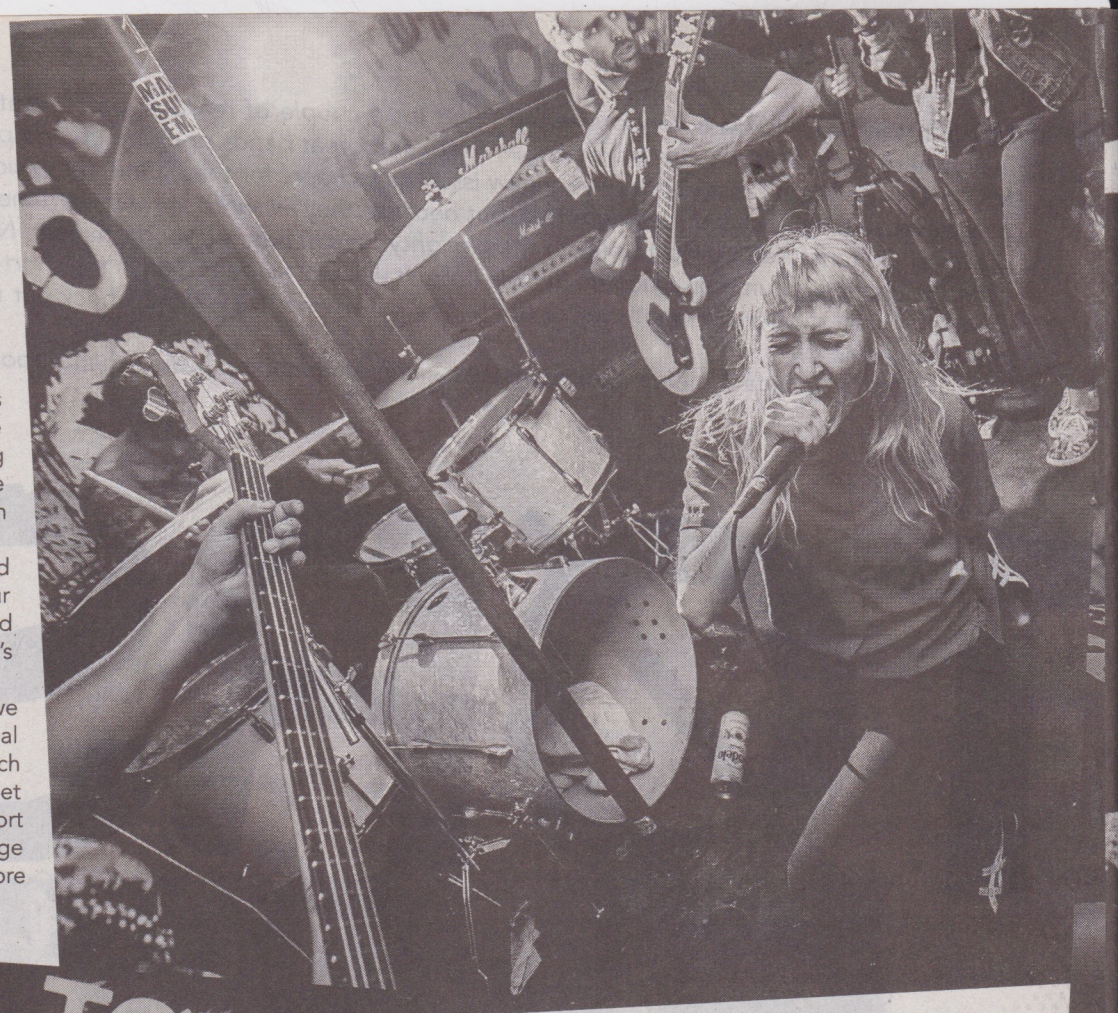
Keith: Really, I'd say, it's awesome to be a part of such a massive collaborative effort. A lot of energy goes into planning a tour from our individual efforts down to those of the promoters, bands, and people working and attending the shows! I'd also like to add that

without having experienced a DIY tour, it can be hard to grasp the immense amount of hospitality that we experience on a daily basis when on the road. So thanks to anyone who has ever hosted us!

Ethan: Getting to know my bandmates on the first tour made a good impression on me, since I didn't know Keith at all and I barely knew Giacomo, and Jasmine is perfect. The negative things are being talked down to, or feeling alienated, by weird dudes. Or some dude mansplaining to you to preach the straightedge.

Jasmine: Experiencing misogyny and homophobia when you leave your bubble of chosen friends on the road and meet some random dude that's gonna call a fanny pack gay.

Keith: Too true. Sometimes we encounter some less than ideal mentalities, but who wants to preach to the choir anyway? It's great to let people know they have a support system, but it's important to challenge others with healthier and more productive ways of thinking.



MRR: What things have you re-evaluated or what ideas where challenged when you toured?

Keith: I'm solid as a rock. Mindless drones aren't changing my mind with their bad attitudes. Get outta here with that nonsense. Though, I will say that while some people are very motivated by their own self-hatred to shut you down, punk introduced me to a lot of the fundamentals: veganism, straight edge, anarchism, and various other forms of respect towards yourself and others. Touring specifically will put your interpersonal and problem solving skills to the test because it's necessary to interact with hungry, tired, and lonely folks on a regular basis. A little Dale Carnegie goes a long way.

MRR: What do you guys do in real life? How do you all manage to get time off for touring?

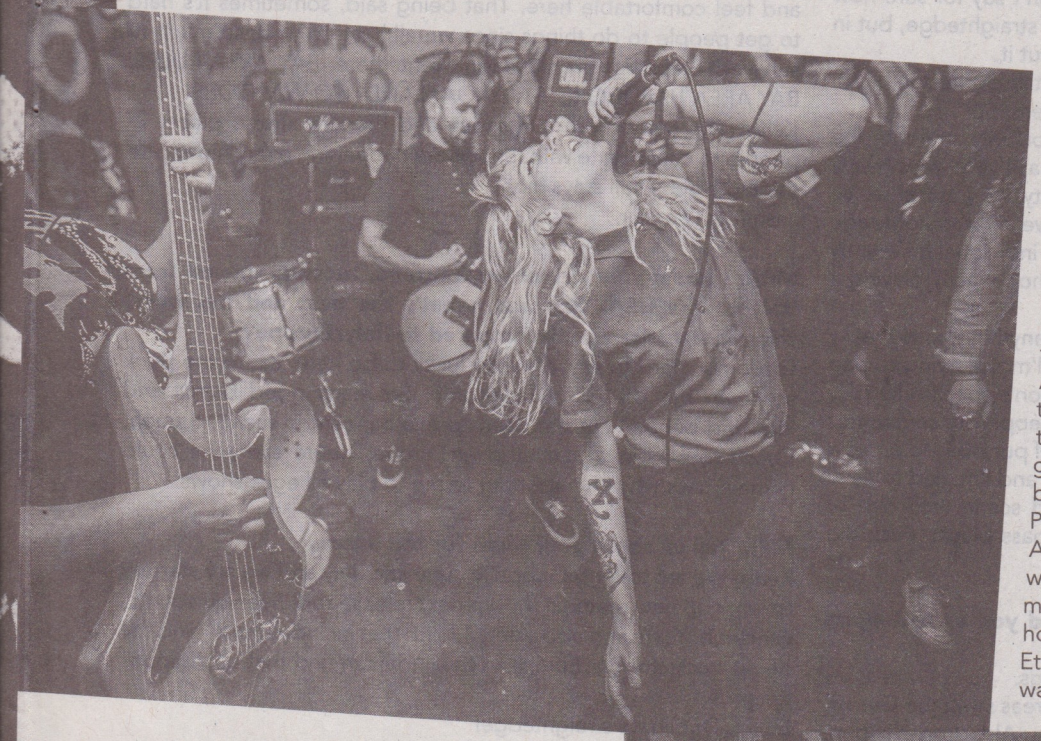
Ethan: *[laughs]* Punk is real life. I am a dog and cat mom and collect *Mrs. Doubtfire* VHS. I also work at a grocery store and pray that they give me the time off I need every time I request it, but it's never a guarantee.

Giacomo: So in real life I guess I just play drums because I have three other bands. I sing in one, but I'm always at the practice space playing. Beyond that I'm pretty into participating in pasta eating competitions until I puke and hanging at my friend Scootch's house. I work at a screen-printing shop and a bar. Luckily both of my bosses are punk, so they understand the importance of touring. Being a full time punx is a commitment.

Keith: Outside of Tørsö, I travel, ride my bike, read sci-fi, hang in the sun, watch horror and exploitation films, and scour the city looking for high-quality fruit. I also do research at UC

Berkeley in the linguistics department. I analyze and classify indigenous languages of the Amazon basin. As for work, I help others decrease their stress, increase their productivity, and curb their blind consumerist habits! I'm my own boss, so I work for my dreams, not someone else's.

Jasmine: In my personal life I enjoy things such as hanging out with dogs and cats, skateboarding, hiking, and watching Italian horror movies. Also, with the rain we've *finally* gotten recently, I've kicked my movie watching into overdrive and I highly recommend *Hard Target* starring John Claude Van Dam. I work at a natural pet food store in San Francisco called Jeffrey's Natural Pet Foods. We focus on local, organic, and biologically appropriate cat and dog food. My boss is cool and is a rad punk lady who understands the importance of touring and lets me take time off for it. The twelve years before that, I worked at Whole Foods and they were also good about letting me take time off.



MRR: How did you all meet?

Jasmine: I met Giacomo when he was staying at my house for two weeks after Holy/Punch tour in June 2013. Keith and I met through mutual friends in the Bay Area, our involvement in the punk scene, and our mutual love of horror movies. I met Ethan when she moved back from Pittsburgh because she's a pit boss.

Ethan: I met Jasmine because I love all vegan straightedge ladies.

Giacomo: Keith and I met in Germany a long time ago when Punch was touring Europe. Afterwards, I ended up booking them when they would play in Italy. We've been playing together since October 2013. We are really good friends and I guess that's why our band works! Jasmine and I met after the Punch and Holy tour in the summer of 2013. After the tour I stayed at her house for two weeks, which actually turned into a month. I met Ethan when Ritual Control played at her house in Oakland.

Ethan: I met Keith at the first Tørsö practice I was at.

MRR: Do you hang out outside the band and how important do you think friendship is towards making a band work?

Jasmine: Super important.

Ethan: I found it increasingly more important in this band because it's more motivating to tour and record and write music with people that you enjoy being around.

Keith: Friendship is the icing on the cake and can really enhance the fun element of collaborating with others. Apart from casual hangs and local show outings, if we're lucky we'll ride bikes and get food together.

Ethan: I call and text every member of the band as much as I can. I love hanging out with all of them. Often times I come to Keith for all of my organizational needs. Sometimes I don't plan to hang out and just get to see one of them at a coffee shop or at the cemetery when I'm walking my pup.

MRR: Tell us a bit about the new record. It has a very strong early '80s Italian hardcore aesthetic to the artwork. Was that deliberate?

Jasmine: Oh definitely! We told Kettner to reference that Wretched cover for style.

Ethan: We ripped that the fuck off hella quick!
Keith: Italian hardcore fanzines from the '80s rule! I made the insert and I wanted to honor that aesthetic.
Giacomo: Hey, I'm Italian! Fuck you!

MRR: You are all SXE, correct? Has that affected how people—both SXE and non—approach you? Do you ever feel boxed into a specific genre or sound because of this?
All: CORRECT!
Jasmine: Does a fish know it's in water?! I can't say for sure how people would treat me differently if I weren't straightedge, but in general people seem respectful and chill about it.
Keith: It's important to note that this is our first straightedge band. We can only hope that others share our excitement!
Giacomo: I've always been one of the few or only straightedge people in my group of friends, and I feel that I've always had a positive reaction from people for my sobriety. As a band we've never felt treated differently simply because we are a straightedge band, just as we don't treat non-straightedge individual differently for not being sober. Not to mention we are not exactly playing a straightedge specific genre.
Ethan: I love being straightedge more than anything, and I really feel like it was the right life decision for me. I'm not trying to bag on people that aren't straightedge, and I don't specifically only listen to straightedge hardcore at all. I think people are sometimes skeptical of my knowledge on other genres of punk based on how hard I back straightedge. I feel great about it and I'm glad to have a presence in a historically male-dominated scene with one of my best friends, who is an above average bass player. Fuck the haters.

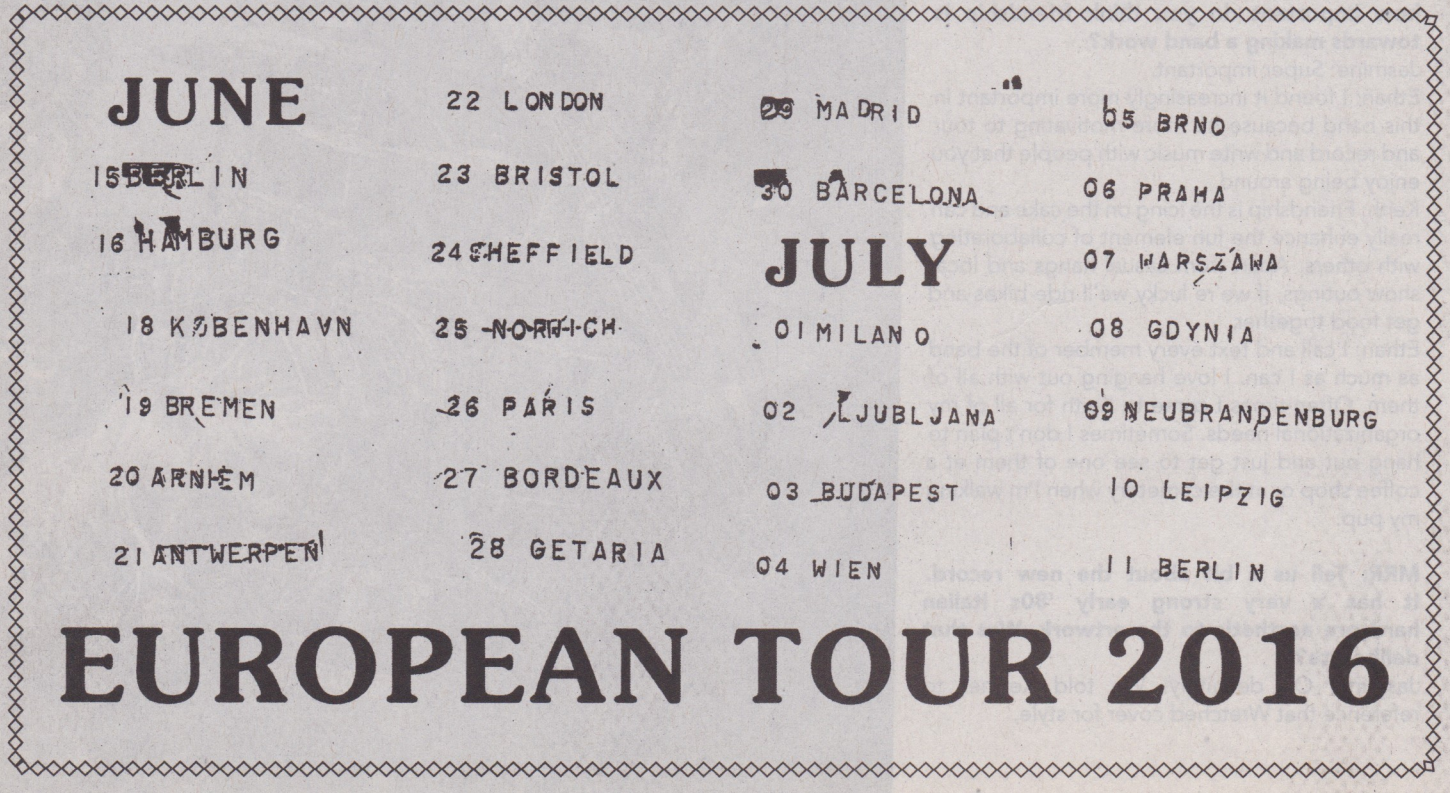
MRR: What are some bands that affected you as teenagers but that you still listen to today?
Ethan: Poison Idea, SSD, Discharge, Cro-Mags.
Jasmine: A lot of early LA and surrounding areas stuff: the Germs, the Go-Gos, Suburban Lawns, Rikk Agnew. Also Iron Maiden, Crass, Siouxsie & the Banshees, and Minor Threat.
Keith: Classics are classics. You can't argue with that! I still listen to the old-school American hardcore and youth crew bands I was into, '80s pop music, Metallica, and Sabbath.
G: '80s Italian hardcore and UK 82. And Sepultura! Hi Max! I hope you can read this. Hi! I love you. Bye.

MRR: Worst and best thing about being a punk in the Bay Area in 2016?
Giacomo: I just got here.
Ethan: I was born and raised in Oakland, so it's nice to be home and feel comfortable here. That being said, sometimes it's hard to get people to do things since we all have to work so much to survive because of the increasing rents here. BAY AREA RULES! BAY AREA HARDCORE, BABY! OAKLAND! GO WARRIORS!
Keith: The scene here is massive and there're always plenty of people to collaborate with. Shows are happening every night, and the motivation still stays high!
Jasmine: I concur.

MRR: I know your drummer, Giacomo, recently moved from Italy to the USA. Giacomo, what's the best and the worst thing in American punk compared to Italy/Europe?
Giacomo: Hard to say. I feel so lucky to be here 'cause the punk scene in the USA is so awesome! So many good bands and inspiring people! I'm not used to this bar-centric scene, though. I used to play in squats all over Europe, where everyone could come. That's why it's important to me to play all ages shows.

MRR: Tell us about your plans for the future.
Keith: We are touring Europe in June and July and we are starting to work on new material for our next release too! See you soon!
Giacomo: Yeah, and also a new 12" EP that includes the 7" and the demo tracks for our European tour. You can find that on Agipunk Records.
Ethan: Dominate straightedge!

torsoxvx.bandcamp.com



MOLLOT

It is impossible to describe Mollot in a way that fully encapsulates them as a band. It also feels impossible to separate myself from them as human beings that I have the pleasure of knowing as friends, but I am going to try.

Maybe it's worth mentioning that I have known the members of Mollot—some more personally and some through growing up in the same spaces—for a significant amount of time, some of them from as far back as elementary school. If you had told me that one day they would all be sitting in my living room talking about their experiences and recent kickass tour of the US, I wouldn't be able to believe you. But here we are.

Nobody who has seen Mollot in concert could say they were ready for what they heard, especially when they just started hitting the scene and causing excitement as a young new Toronto band. Arina Moiseychenko's captivating vocal ability and presence as a front person is consistently extraordinary. What makes Mollot such a unique band within TOHC is the dynamic nature of their live performances. With a wide range of musicians and musical styles comprising the group, they manage to seamlessly transition from harsh punk that evokes a vision of Justin Trudeau being mauled by velociraptors to full-blown free form noise punctuated by Noah Aviles-Betel's rapturous drumming and a lot of wailing feedback. It's a captivating and hypnotic experience that feels both grating and welcoming at the same time. There is a passion and jazz to it that has become typical of the band, hence their rapid surge in prominence within Toronto and, as of recently, throughout punk scenes in the United States as well.

They returned from a tour of the US that included Chicago, St. Louis, Hammond, and Detroit, playing with bands such as Bleeding Gums, Macé, Q, Lumpy and the Dumpers, Veil, CCTV, and Bib. Their sheer, dynamic power undoubtedly stood strong alongside the stacked lineups of punk rock heavy hitters.

The future of Mollot is truly unknown at this point. No one can say where the band is going to go from here, but what we can say is that they kicked all of our asses and showed us what true love and power looks like in punk. Mollot are funky and angry and loud. Everyone in TOHC is smiling for them.

Interview and introduction by Alessia Dowhaniuk.
Photos provided by Keir Gilchrist and Alex Kress.

MRR: How did the band start?
Evan: Keaton and I were hanging out in Noah's r oom at the time—
Keaton: No...
Evan: Yeah..?
Keaton: It was Ian's basement.
Evan: No, it wasn't...you are definitely wrong!
Noah: We were...chilling at a friend's house.
Evan: Anyways...were listening to Ooze. [To Keaton] Do you remember that? Yeah, we were listening to the Ooze 7", and I just looked over at Keaton and I just said, "Let's start a band" and he just said, "Yeah, OK!" Then it kind of all fell into place just talking to random people at shows. Then our friend Mackenzie let me know that Arina wanted to start a band and here we are. Our first drummer, Gabe (who's on the first demo), left to go to Chile, so we asked Noah to fill in.
Keaton: It was all Gilchrist. I just kind of sat around and showed up to the first practice.

Keaton: It's like, we're the kind of band where you listen to us and then you listen to any other punk band in the same sitting.
Arina: I don't think there is anything that we sound like specifically.
Noah: I think we're really unique and really not unique at the exact same time.

MRR: The band name is in Russian and some of the lyrics in Russian.
Arina: Not all of my lyrics are in Russian, but the ones that are, are so personal that I didn't want anyone to ever be able to "decode" what I was saying. And the name is Russian pretty much because everyone was like "you wrote the lyrics so you pick the name." It's just a mean word that basically translates to "really big old hammer."

MRR: Has being in Mollot changed your perception of punk in any way?
All: Yes.
Keaton: I never listen to a lot of punk music and really only went to shows at Noah's house. I don't feel very "punk," per se, but I know that shouldn't really matter. But it's definitely made me pay more attention. Not that I wasn't paying attention beforehand, but seeing that everyone is so aware and talking about bands we should play shows with made me feel way more involved.
Arina: For me, I used to always hear about touring bands being so welcomed and well received and everyone being so willing to [accommodate] them, and I never really thought of it as a possibility in terms of this band. But when we went on tour, everyone was extremely welcoming for us. And I realized these things actually happen. I guess I see it as a friendlier scene now than I did before.

MRR: Was Ooze an inspiration for you guys musically? Were there any other musical influences behind Mollot?
Evan: I think Ooze was an inspiration in the beginning, but the band never ended up sounding anything like that. It was more a reason to start the band and the rest sort of just fell into place. I was just starting to learn bass.
Keaton: We just played what we knew. And I could only play like, funk 4:4.
Arina: I had no inspiration.
Noah: Hardcore bands that circulate in our spaces. I feel like this is one of those bands whose existence is solidified by the other bands around us. We don't stand alone, we stand with other bands and we cater to all these people that dig this kind of punk. Like, it's a community of so many bands that aren't even all in Toronto. Like I would put us with a band like Q.

MRR: Was there ever a point during a show where you felt like you had been pigeonholed as a "young" punk band?
Evan: Well, we're definitely considered young.
Keaton: But not necessarily in a negative way. I don't think we've ever been written off because of it.
Noah: I feel like it's mostly been used in a positive sense but like, at the Perfect Pussy show it definitely felt like they just wanted a "young" band on the bill so they got us to play.

MRR: How did that make you feel?
Noah: I think it's cool. But I still think my size and my age and what I look like plays a part in what a 25-year-old might think of my band. I don't think I'm old enough yet for that to stop happening.

Evan: I agree! I always
heard people talking about punk as this "worldwide community" and that was never really reality for me, but having gone on tour it definitely felt that way.
Noah: I felt like being in this band showed me what community means in the context of punk and how that works in real life. I also became more aware of a lot of trends in hardcore and just got exposed to so many things I wouldn't have thought about otherwise. Like how different people interpret the music and what makes punk awesome for them. Because different people like it for different reasons and that's why music is accepted differently and liked in different ways. I don't know if I would have known that if I wasn't in this band.

MRR: Going back to tour, was there anything that stood out for you in the States?
All: The Q boys.

All: THE Q BOYS!!! *[laughter]*
Arina: Definitely seeing how total strangers can become the best of friends. Because you all have this one thing in common that your life revolves around. And when you meet a stranger that spends just as much time involved in punk as you do, they spend as much time doing all the same things that you do, you instantly become friends without even having a lot of other things in common to start with.
Noah: It's like, why do I love those guys? I have no fucking idea, but I love them! Through nothing more than the bond of punk!
Arina: Also...Q. Just sayin...
Noah: It's just so cool to see people the same age as us, people who we may have never gotten close to, but because of our bands I know I'll hang out with them every time I see them.

a week to go on a lil tour with one of his bands and it's like "Oh, I can do that too!" You know, it just makes me feel like there isn't a certain age that I have to be doing this at. I can be doing it right now.

MRR: Do you feel like you have grown as a band or developed musically since you started? Was there any moment or specific experience that made you feel you had?
Noah: I feel like after around October, when we did our split tape with the Boys, was when I was really like, "OK, we're doing this." But before that, personally I kind of still felt like a replacement for Gabe and like I was just doing my part. But after that split was when I started to feel more comfortable with our sound and adding my own style and I guess being a showoff on the drums.

That for me was when I felt like we had improved.
Evan: Like being more tour tight.
Keaton: We also definitely developed once Noah joined the band. Our sound changed in a good way.

MRR: What are you most proud of?
Evan: My friends!
Keaton [to Evan]: This beautiful guy right here!
Evan: Just having the drive to go and *do* stuff. I mean like, going on tour was such a huge thing. It was all of our first tour and I think that was a huge thing that I know I'm proud of and we're all proud that we got through that and finished it. And just being able to play with our friends' bands and bands that we love. That's a huge thing for me.

Evan: Everything really stood out on tour because it was such an amazing experience for all of us. We got to play with so many bands that we love and listen to all the time. And we get to meet the people we idolize and realize they're just people as well, even though some of these bands are such big bands. And seeing all the support, because we're all pretty young, so having that support from all these strangers is a really encouraging thing. I think everything on tour was amazing and just getting to hang out, spending all of our time together, was really great.
Arina: Not trying to go back to Q, but...going back to Q, like, just seeing people as young as you sacrificing just as much of the time that they're supposed to be doing stuff like going to school or something, to go to other cities and play shows is so inspiring. Like Matt Wyndrinski from CCTV is seventeen or something and he skipped school for like

Keaton: On the tour we weren't playing with any of our own gear so we were kind of just making it work every time.
Evan: Yeah, I don't think tour helped cement our sound or helped it develop further than it already was.
Keaton: Since we started playing more noise during our sets [Interviewer's note: There was a legendary Chain Rank show where Mollot played their first set of almost complete noise], we always wanted to be really loud and have a lot of feedback, but it wasn't really textured in any way. I think now it's more textured than it was before.
Arina: On tour, at least from my perspective, we knew when one of us was going to change a part and whenever someone changed a part we could all just go along with it instead of not being able to keep up and fucking up. Like if one person played for longer, then everyone knew to play for longer. Or like if Keaton soloed for like three extra minutes we would just keep going.

Keaton: I guess just getting better at doing what we're doing.
Evan: And being able to make friends doing that.
Arina: I'm proud that none of us got lost in the States!
Noah: I'm proud to have worked with all these different types of musicians—
Keaton: He means *worse*!
Noah: I won't lie, I'm at a loss for words because I'm not really proud of the way I reacted to the struggles that I faced with this band, but as a whole I'm proud that we *did* everything that we did. I'm proud that we did it.

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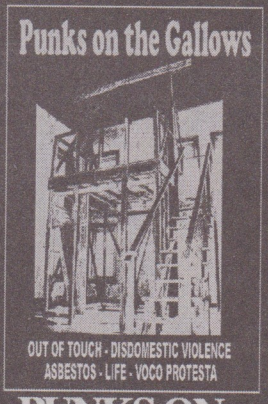

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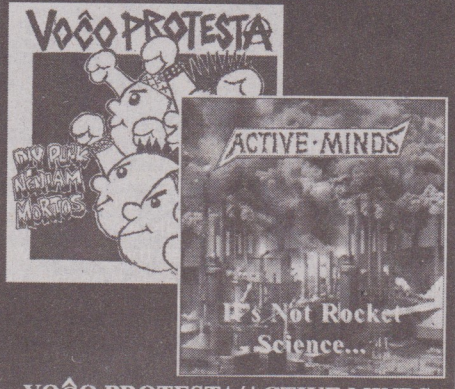

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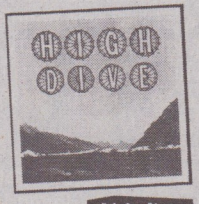

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Not many punks can claim they've kept their high school band going for ten years, nor would many want to admit to its existence in the first place. Emerging from the remote northern tropics of Australia and now scattered down the east coast, Red Red Krovvy are the exception. Over ten years and thousands of kilometers, the trio have kept their own brand of bratty pogo punk going. I sat down with Ashleigh, Ben, and Adam to find out more about growing up punk in Cairns, the band's longevity, and what's in the future for Red Red Krovvy over some Indian takeaway in a park in Melbourne's north.

Interview and introduction by Tessa Tribe.
Photos provided by the band.

MRR: Introduce yourselves and what instrument you play.
Adam: My names Adam, I play the tubs.
Ben: You play the tubs real good. I play guitar and sing a bit.
Ash: I just sing.

MRR: So Red Red Krovvy have been going for quite a while now—almost ten years, isn't it? Even though you guys are mostly still in your early to mid twenties, so that's starting pretty young...when did Red Red Krovvy start and how?
Ben: It started as a high school thing. We all grew up in Cairns and there wasn't much to keep us occupied there. We all for some reason or another had an interest in punk. My older brother and a few of his friends put me onto burnt CDs of bands like the Stooges and electric eels and I started playing guitar. Adam's mum had a mid-life crisis and bought a drum kit...
Adam: So I acquired that. I think she played it like twice
Ash: Thanks, mum!
Adam: She was so shit.
Ben: We started playing in the music rooms at school but they stopped letting us in there after a while because we were a bit shit…
Ash: We had our first show at a lunchtime battle of the bands—we were all about sixteen/seventeen when we all started.

MRR: You guys are all originally from the fine city of Cairns...what's it like?
Ash: Cairns is really far away from everything, it's at the top of Australia in Queensland. There's no major cities within driving distance at all, it's fucking hot, super tropical, and a big tourist destination.
Ben: It's a wasteland for backpackers and any young people there are usually into shitty nightclubbing.
Adam: But that's only during tourist season, the rest of the year it's desolate.
Ash: So hot and wet.
Ben: But also incredibly beautiful,
Ash: Its pretty much *Jurassic Park*.
Ben: You have the Great Barrier Reef, then you walk on a shitty crocodile infested beach, and then you're in beautiful rainforest.

MRR: Got any croc stories?
Ben: I remember having to be a bit wary walking to sports training past a creek where they were every once in a while…but no run ins.
Ash: My house was near a place called Dead Man's Gully that was infested with crocs.

MRR: Tell me more about growing up punk in Cairns. Was it just you guys?
Adam: It wasn't just us. We didn't really branch out outside of our school, but there were kids into it younger than us. We'd set up house shows that the few bands that did exist played.
Ben: There was even rivalries between our school's bands and other schools'.
Ben: Mostly they were ska bands...
Ash: The Back-seat Bandits, ha!
Ben: It's kinda nice in that sense because everyone was very supportive and close knit because it was so small. We weren't always into the same stuff but appreciated that it wasn't just skateboarding and listening to Blink-182 but had a bit more of a weirdo vibe.
Ash: If I didn't have the friends I did have, it would've been very difficult

MRR: So there was a bit of a punk scene going?
Ash: Barely...board short punks at best.
Adam: At most twenty kids.

MRR: Is there anything happening in Cairns right now?
Adam: Nah, nothing. Only awful metalcore bands

MRR: Ash, were there many girls into punk in Cairns or was it a bit of a boys club?
Ash: Yeah, definitely a bit of a boys club… I'm trying to think back to who we played with...I think once we played with a band with a girl in it, but they weren't a punk band at all.
So yeah, it was a total boys club, but I never felt too excluded because of gender, although now that I think about it I think I tried super hard to be another one of the guys.

MRR: Ash, what do you mostly write your lyrics about? Has it changed much over the years?
Ash: Well, honestly most of the lyrics come from Ben's mind...

Ben: It's migrated more to me. When we started off, Adam wrote a lot of the lyrics.
Ash: The lyrics are all about obtuse things. There's songs about economy, about stressing about being late all the time, there's a song about a guy walking around an art gallery looking for a Rembrandt painting.
Ben: I think when writing songs I look at the very mundane, banal aspects of life, or the very depressing aspects of life.
Ash: The songs I write are more about feeling anxious, but we collaborate a lot when we practice.
Ben: The lyrics I write are mostly looking internally at stupid shit. The song "Holiday" is about me or anyone travelling overseas to escape a nine-to-five reality, where instead of getting on a plane to the other side of the world, how hard it is to make changes to your everyday life a bit better.
Ash: It's not particularly deep stuff.

MRR: But boy is it catchy! So when Adam and Ash moved to Melbourne and Ben moved to Sydney, what made you want to keep your teenage band going over such a large distance? You guys have been quite productive for a band that started out so young and isolated.
Adam: We just get along really well I guess.
Ash: I think not many people's first bands are very good...
Adam: Out of all the bands I did play in in Cairns, this one was the most fun.
Ash: We still like Black Flag and we still like all the bands that would've influenced us to start the band in the first place. Whereas people who played in ska and metalcore bands in high school generally grow out of it.
Ben: I don't know how many bands are still playing Tool's "Sober" now...
Ash: In Cairns? I reckon still heaps! *[laughs]*
Ben: It seems like that's a thing you would get over...you get an office job and you stop

caring about playing Tool. Maybe it's the social isolation, but you form a better bond and care about what you're doing when you know you're not the only person doing like-minded things. Even though in Melbourne it's like there's thousands of people doing a similar thing, it's still nice to have that history but also that understanding that you get from knowing each other for so long.

MRR: What's in the future for Red Red Krovvy? Any upcoming releases?
Adam: We're just finishing off a full-length.
Ash: Our first album.
Adam: We recorded and mixed it ourselves.
Ben: It's taking a long time because I'm in Sydney
Ash: And as well as living in a different city, Adam and I are in various other bands in Melbourne.

MRR: So you've had to do it in bits and pieces over a long time?
Ben: I've been trying to be super productive every time I come to Melbourne, so instead of calling up my younger brother and hanging out, I'm like, "Sorry man, I've got more important things to do." I got in on Thursday night this time and we did six or seven hours yesterday and another five hours today. Trying to do things right takes time.
Adam: But it's good we have control over it.
Ash: It's our first album ever, we may as well put some effort into it. All our recordings til now and the Red Red Krovvy ethos have always been "that'll do," mainly because we never have time.
Ben: The first 7" we recorded with Alex McFarlane. He did a really quick set up so we recorded it in one afternoon. The second one was the same, this time with Lincoln Brown in Sydney. We did it in another afternoon and were playing a show that night, so we finished in five hours.

MRR: That was the *Global Citizen* 7"?
Adam: Yeah, we did that completely live. This time round we can do overdubs for a change.
Ben: I think sometimes punk albums get boring and repetitive because it's all recorded at the same speed at the same time, so we're trying to make it a bit more interesting over 20–30 minutes.

MRR: So when's the new album coming out?
Ash: I'd like to say we'll have everything done by the end of the year...
Ben: With pressing times taking so damn long in this day and age who bloody knows. Straight to floppy disc I say!

MRR: Favorite current bands going right now?
Adam: I really like Whipper and Geld, both from Melbourne.
Ben: Sex Tourist from Sydney, always good to see. I'm bummed I didn't get to see the Stevens last night…yeah, that'll do.
Adam: Honestly I just wanna listen to Blue Öyster Cult.
Ash: Internal Rot, Dead Boomers, Stations. I'll always leave the house to see those guys.
Ben: I'm really bummed Housewives haven't released an album yet even though that was meant to happen eighteen months ago.

soundcloud.com/red-red-krovvy

IV

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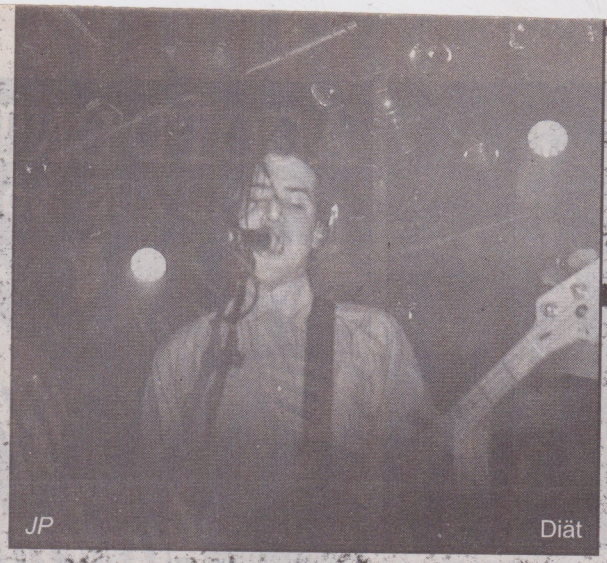

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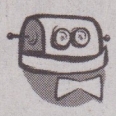

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THE DOMESTICS

The Domestics could be the hardest working hardcore band in East Anglia, UK—and that's not an easy thing. Vocalist James Scott keeps getting a stomach ulcer he works so hard. If writing tons of high speed punk songs, running Kibou Records/distro, arranging gigs all over the UK, writing fanzines and working full time wasn't enough, now he's got a load of questions from us to answer...

Interview and introduction by Sam Marsh and Jay Mills. Photos by Tim 'Bev' Bevington.

MRR: What was the first hardcore record you got into? How did it make you feel?

JAMES: I remember buying DRI's *Dirty Rotten* album and Corrosion of Conformity's *Six Songs with Mike Singing* 12" on the same day on a trip to London as a teen—they'd been out for a good while but were new to me. I guess I used to see these bands' logos on the shirts of a lot of other bands I liked at that time and took a punt on them. I'd never heard anything like them! DRI especially was so fuckin' fast I just didn't know what to make of it at all! Was it amazing? Was it terrible? Anyway, I was intrigued enough to keep playing it and eventually my ears became accustomed to the onslaught and I could pick out the tunes. I was pretty disappointed with a lot of the other DRI records I heard after that when they did their whole crossover thing, but I still love Dirty Rotten to this day. So, in terms of how it made me feel? I guess initially confused! And then completely blown away! Not long after that I got to know some older punks—Pete, Dave, and Colin—who played me some more mind-blowing stuff like Discharge – *Why?,* Extreme Noise Terror – *Holocaust in your Head*, Resist – *The Only Solution*..., Electro Hippies – *The Only Good Punk*...just tons of great stuff. Once I got right into it, I guess it made me feel empowered to some extent. That sense of empowerment didn't manifest itself until a bit later on though.

RHODES: The first hardcore band I really saw and owned a record of was Volunteers. It made me feel fun.

ED: Weren't Corrosion of Conformity a metal band? I'd never have classed them as hardcore. Although I'd been listening to Hüsker Dü and Bad Brains since before I even knew what punk was. I've generally been more interested in anarcho than hardcore as a rule (as well as pop punk and a bit of ska). Crass, Conflict, NOFX, and Rancid were the bands that really pushed me into punk rock in an "I can do this" sort of way. Minor Threat were probably the first actual hardcore band I listened to. A guy called Alex Paige that I worked with in a record shop in my early 20s gave me a copy of the discography...It's a bit like Hüsker Dü without the melodies.

JAMES: Mate, you haven't heard the best COC. stuff then, when they were actually a hardcore band...they did turn into a really shit metal band, though...check out *Six Songs*... or *Eye for an Eye*; they were shit after that, though!

SIMON: It was Minor Threat for me. It made me feel like I wanted to have a go at this hardcore punk stuff; seemed like fun! There were a couple of hardcore bands about in the local scene at the time too, the most memorable being Volunteers and Full Collapse. I remember thinking it sounds pretty good on CD, but the live shows are what it's all about!

MRR: Tell me about the moment you became "dedicated to the cause"?

JAMES: Well, I'd been listening to punk, indie, and some thrash metal stuff when I was around thirteen and playing in a terrible band that had no clue what we were doing really. Then I met the guys I mentioned earlier and through them playing me stuff and Pete's Bad Voltage distro and being exposed to fanzine culture and putting on gigs and joining KRAPP with Pete and Dave...it was incremental, I guess. I mean at first I used to see adverts for distros in zines (including Dave's *Stonkage*) and think "This can't be real. How can they be selling albums for four quid? And you just send the money to someone's home address?" I was convinced it must be some kind of con. Then I realized that's how Bad Voltage operated...basically the whole idea of DIY was introduced to me by those fellas (whom I'm still mates with to this day). So yeah, hardcore and DIY kind of went hand in hand for me. The whole hardcore/DIY ethos of keeping things financially accessible,

creating things—music, art, zines, gigs, distros, having these things be self-supporting, getting involved. The overarching political ideas that were/are inherent to this world just made a massive impact on me—of self-fulfillment, self-expression, of helping others out with your accrued skills and knowledge and asking for help when needed...all this stuff; this is what hardcore's about to me. Of course there are all the amazing bands and records (and a few shit ones too, obviously!), but it's the DIY approach that I felt the most keenly. All the stuff that had seemed like things that other people could do were now things that I could do!

RHODES: To be honest it's only really since the Domestics started a few years back that I've got more into punk. Having James in the band as a hardcore punk guru and pushing his records on us from his distro like a crack dealer helps. I have a wide (slightly odd) taste in music and have always taken the DIY route whatever the musical genre I was currently involved in. I remember seeing Motörhead, Nine Below Zero, and the Damned on *The Young Ones* as a kid, which probably gave me my first insight into, and enjoyment of, the punk realms. It's only the last four or five years that I've got more into hardcore and realized the punk scene in general is the most fun, energetic, happy scene full of the most accommodating, lovely people, and I want to be a full on part of it for as long as possible. Plus the riffs are top notch.

ED: I formed my first punk band about fifteen years ago. ICH used pop punk chord structures, but set them to anarcho rhythms (the Paco beat)...it was around this time that I developed an interest in hardcore. What I really like in music is speed, aggression, and melody. Bands like Shelter had that in spades.

SIMON: I think I was about eighteen; I was already very much into punk beforehand, mostly into the '90s era US streetpunk scene, but some of it just didn't hit hard enough. That's when I realized I needed some hardcore in my life.

MINT: I liked bits of punk before but have only really got involved since joining the Domestics. Fast music, nice people, and booze. You can't go wrong.

MRR: Hardcore is the best. Discuss

JAMES: 'Cos it's punker than punk. Nah, the great thing is there are always so many great bands doing great things in hardcore and none of the bands are under any illusions that they're going to get rich or famous off it so they just do what they want, which keeps it purer and rawer in a sense. Also, what other music scene is there where it's perfectly normal for westerners to listen to bands from Japan, Sweden, Spain, USA, UK, Canada, Indonesia, Finland...well you get the idea: Hardcore is world music without all the worthiness the term implies. Just this past few days I've been playing Sudor, Pure Disgust, Rad, Government Flu, Cross Class, Haramarah, Wolfhour, Kronofogden, Arms Race, MG15, Warhead, Charm, Fuk, Blazing Eye, Obstruct, Career Suicide, Koward...I mean, the list of amazing bands from all over is just mind blowing. I can't keep up!

SIMON: To be honest, it's not the sub-genre of punk that I like the best. I am a sucker for street/ pogo punk primarily, the Restarts being a big favourite of mine. I think punk in its entirety is a great thing really, though most of those things James has mentioned above can be applied to the scene as a whole in my opinion.

MRR: Why is it that more people don't love hardcore punk? Do they feel threatened by it? How can we share the love and reassure them?

JAMES: I guess it's like I said about that DRI album; it took me a while to acclimatize. When I was fifteen there was no real internet. The music you heard was what you bought or what your mates had bought and played to you. Or I guess what you heard on TV and radio...not that there was that much on offer from either of those mediums. Now, people can find something online, play it for a minute, decide it's not for them, and move on. When you were fifteen back then and you had very little money you'd buy a record and if you didn't like it the first time, you'd play it again...and again...and again. Often you'd get to like those records that didn't grab you the first time, because they were out of your initial frame of reference, through sticking with them. I guess the speed and aggression makes the uninitiated think hardcore is just a fuckin' noise...and yeah, much hardcore is very noisy...noisy, not noise. The best hardcore bands have great songs...they're just fast as fuck, distorted, and aggressive. Some of the greatest rewards, in music and in other areas in life, come with perseverance...fuck me, I sound like the Dali Lama!

I'm not sure if people feel threatened by it anymore. I mean, in the early '80s in the US...I mean, I've read the stories, seen the photos. The police turning it into a fuckin' war; TV shows debating the horror of it all...but now? I dunno. Mind you, when you're immersed in something, I guess it's hard to see what an outsider might see; their experience is bound to be qualitatively different to mine or yours.

SIMON: I think the sheer abrasiveness of some recordings are pretty hard to tune your ears to; it's something you get used to after a while. I think taking your friends to local gigs is a pretty good way to get them into it, as the live shows really capture the spirit of it all.

MRR: You are always gigging, doing various tours and getting people to put records out for you and putting on other bands yourself. I know personally you work really hard at it. What motivates you?

JAMES: Well, "always" is stretching it a bit! We do keep pretty busy though which, given that we're all working (three of us full-time in sometimes demanding jobs) and Rhodes has a kid, does require a certain amount of motivation. We usually do three or four mini tours a year (normally Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) plus loads of other gigs all over the country, sometimes linking a couple together where we can. The longer term aim is to do a US tour in 2017, so if anyone wants to help us out with that then get in touch.

The records thing...well, I'd like to put out more records than we do to be honest! There's no shortage of material and I really like records. By the time we put a record out, because I write the songs, they always seem really fuckin' old to me. Sometimes we'll put out a record and those songs I wrote eighteen months ago!

It takes a long time to get the songs sounding

just how we want them and rehearsed up to the degree we like to have 'em rehearsed before we record. We like to get tracks down in one or two takes so it keeps the energy up, and to do that you have to know 'em pretty fuckin' well. The Routine and Ritual album has nearly sold out on vinyl (plenty of CDs left!) so I'm hoping a US, or at least non-UK, label will be into doing a repress sometime soon.

Obviously, running Kibou Records label and distro is a massive drain on my time but means there's an outlet for us there too. But y'know, we put out the first album and 7" ourselves and then TNS said they'd be into putting out our second album; then Imminent Destruction and Orchestrated Dystopia got involved on the vinyl version. The other labels we've been involved with have been the same—they've either come to us or in some instances they're people I know that I've asked to get involved if they want to (sometimes it's been reciprocal in that I've maybe helped with one of their releases). Personally I'm going to rein in putting on gigs; I'm just doing too much—I've started a zine now (*Pull The Trigger*), I must be insane!—and need to slow down. I'm not eighteen anymore and my health's suffered the last couple of years, mostly through overwork, stress, and lifestyle. I've fucked myself up basically and if I want to keep doing this or anything else I need to get some perspective and say 'no' to a few things here and there.

I've always liked creating stuff, though, since I was a kid; that's my motivation. We're able to make really fuckin' good records now; we've hit our stride the past year or two, we've found the right studio to capture what we do really well. Who wouldn't want to make a shitload of records?!?! We'll run out of steam at some point like all bands do—we'll make some terrible synth record or something... but while we're on a roll why not exploit that to the full! I might be dead tomorrow, who knows? Why be half-arsed about something?

ED: James does a really good job of running things. He's the songwriter and bureaucrat in the band. He manages to keep on top of writing the songs, booking the gigs, getting us all into the studio, design, and putting out records for us and lots of other bands. Running the Domestics on a day-to-day level must be a bit like herding cats for him. We generally pay him no attention at all.

MRR: How did Dean Jones from Extreme Noise Terror end up on your record?

RHODES: Special Brew.

JAMES: Well, Extreme Noise Terror had just started recording their latest record when we were about halfway through doing the Routine and Ritual album, and we use the same studio. I've been into Extreme Noise Terror since I was in my teens—the early stuff particularly blew my mind—and just happened to mention to Mark, the producer/studio owner, that "Fuck Your War" would sound great with Dean's vocals on it. Next week I go in one evening to do all the lead vocals and after about three songs Mark says "We have to go and pick Dean up in half an hour." I really hadn't thought anything would come of it, but apparently Extreme Noise Terror had been in in the intervening days and Mark played Dean the track, which he liked, and then after some Special Brew he came and did his thing and it sounded fuckin' great! He's done it live with us once as well. Top man. There was even some talk of Ed joining Extreme Noise Terror at one point...

ED: James nearly shit when he realized we could get Dean on the record.

MRR: Has Simon (the new drummer) changed the sound/dynamics of the band?

JAMES: Well, he's not that new now, really. He's been in since around February 2014, I think. It's funny, really; he started rehearsing with us and before we even did a gig with him we asked him to come up with us to record this secret thing in Manchester for the TNS Records ten year anniversary celebrations. It really has definitely changed the sound having Simon in. Our previous drummer was more of a metal fan and we were always trying to get him to speed up...with Simon it's sometimes the other way around! Nah, I say the faster the better as long as everyone else can keep up.

ED: We can't keep up!

JAMES: The whole thing gels better now we have a drummer with a really solid sense of timing. We're faster and tighter than we were when we started out—it kind of sounds like it was always meant to sound—and this is another reason why we can get basic tracks down really quickly in one or two takes in the studio. He's also no slouch in the art stakes either, having done the cover for *Routine and Ritual* and the new Brutal Regimes 7". It's better all round really. Hail Drummy!

RHODES: Definitely; loads faster and has more of a hardcore sound, we're more productive as well, we get new songs down quicker than before. We seem to have more fun and there is an increased amount of toilet humor now. Not to knock the previous chap—he was a nice bloke and a decent drummer—but mentally and physically it has lifted us which in turn has a positive influence on the performance and probably James' writing of the music. I love sitting in the car for five hours or more with all four of them. I generally get excited about that bit of a gig, sometimes more than the playing. Plus with Mark at Springvale Studios in Ipswich recording our last few bits since Simon's been on board has given us a better, yet grottier, sound.

ED: With Chris drumming we used to get called a UK82 band and compared to the Exploited the whole time (which used to really irk James). Simon is a damned sight faster and tighter. We now actually sound like the hardcore band James wanted all along.

JAMES: Even at the previous speed I could never see the Exploited comparison (or the Conflict one for that matter!). Neither of those bands have any influence on our sound whatsoever! I guess people just use whatever frame of reference they have and, sadly, a lot of UK punks' frame of reference is pretty narrow. I like it when people throw around comparisons like Out Cold or Gauze—that's much nearer the mark.

MRR: Being in a hardcore band...How old is too old?

JAMES: Good question. I mean, I'm the oldest in this band by about five years. I can still do what needs to be done and with 100% attack, but if I ever get to the stage where I'm just phoning it in...well, I like to think that I'd kind of notice things were a bit off and quit, really. Still, John Brannon still seems to have it and

he's a fuckin' lot older than me! As long as I can be John Brannon and not Mark E. Smith—a once great force of nature, now a washed up old geezer just jizzing out a record every year and occasionally writing a half-good tune by accident—I'll be happy to keep doing it.
ED: When Bambi from Eastfield hit fifty he considered giving up because he's always objected to fat old men playing punk past their prime. I told him that as long as he still loves it, that's not really an issue. He's still playing. 7 Seconds are also getting pretty old now and still smash it live. I think as long as you still have passion for it you can go for as long as you like. If you ever find yourself phoning it in, go home and put your slippers on.
MINT: If you can do it and you love it then keep doing it. Even if you're shit. If you love it, keep doing it.

MRR: I keep looking around lately, feeling a bit down on things. It appears to me much of human kind is in the gutter. What do you reckon?
JAMES: I think when people think that then it's just helping push it further into the gutter. You have to have hope or what else have you got? That's why my label's called Kibou (Japanese for "hope"). There are plenty of shitty things and shitty people in the world, but my faith in human nature is frequently restored by the people I meet, many of them involved in the punk scene. I think most people are basically OK. I mean, arseholery is a continuum really and I think a lot of people exist at some point on the opposite end of that continuum—maybe not right at the very end but thereabouts—and a minority are right at the other, massively arseholey end with a fair few others somewhere in between. Also, it's not fixed; catch me on the wrong day and I could be waaaay over on the arsehole side.
RHODES: It probably is. I fail to really see it, though, as all my friends and family, inside or outside the punk scene, are all genuine top people with similar views as me. I don't actually realize things are going tits up and that there are a lot of arseholes about due to the lovely community I'm involved in, which I don't always see outside of. I suppose I stupidly think that most people in the world are like the people I meet at punk shows because it's so friendly and makes so much sense to me.
ED: The punk scene does its best to keep humankind out of the gutter with its basic premise of tolerance, respect, pacifism and understanding.
SIMON: I think it's human nature to see the worst in everything—you have to search a little harder to find the good in it all. I think the primary objective of the punk scene is to make changes for the better, and we are stupidly persistent about it all...It's another thing I love about punk; the media claims that punk has been long since dead and buried, but everyone involved just ignores that shit and keeps fighting! Even if humankind is in the gutter, we can drag it back out!
MINT: I think that we have a foul group of people in charge of the country who are dragging people down and setting people against each other. I do believe that humans are generally good though, so there is hope in that, I think. Basically fuck the Tories though, isn't it.

MRR: And so...If the future is looking bleak, is it worth having children?
JAMES: Well, we don't have kids and have no plans to, so I guess that answers that one!
RHODES: I got a kid, she's great. She's only two and a bit at the moment, so a really fun age. four years ago I would have said no, I never wanted children, but wouldn't mind another now for a bit of sibling rivalry. The future does looks bleak, it always does though; if anything having kids blinker you from that as you're always having super fun times with them especially now I'm getting her into listening and playing music more.
ED: Nope.
SIMON: If the future was bright I still wouldn't have kids, little freaky things.
MINT: I've got a dog instead.

MRR: Anything else you want to add?
JAMES: Only cheers for the interview, and to say you can find stuff at the usual places—Bandcamp, Faceache, all that usual stuff. The label and distro (where you can get all the Domestics stuff still available and tons more) is at kibourecords.bigcartel.com. Contact us if you want us to play in your town or country.
RHODES: I record local bands for gin on primitive equipment, including some of the earlier Domestics stuff, plus have a small distro. You can find it all at hobopope.com.
SIMON: Me and Ed are involved in another band together, called Casual Nausea, check us out!
ED: Up the fuckin' Naus. I've got a new band in the pipeline too... Keep your ear to the ground, there's always good new music to find.

thedomesticspunk@hotmail.co.uk

A PRODIGAL PUNK RETURNS TO HER ROOTS

by Fabiola Bazo

In her first personal documentary, Prodigal Daughter, *Mabel Valdiviezo tells the story of her daring life as a female punk in Lima in the '80s, her fleeing of Peru in the early '90s to become an undocumented immigrant in the USA, and her return to Lima after sixteen years to reconcile with her family and revive her connections with the punk community ("subterráneos"). This is the first documentary that captures the experiences of a woman in the Peruvian DIY punk scene from a female perspective.*

I Am Just a Girl

Mabel, the second of seven children of a migrant couple from the North of Peru, grew up in Collique ("Silver Hill" in Quechua), a shantytown in the north of Lima (then known as "Cono norte"). Her mother was a seamstress and her father a locksmith.

Mabel was a tomboy who protected her friends from bullies in elementary school. She excelled academically in high school, especially in arts. This success brought jealousy among her girl friends and higher expectations from her family. Mabel had a strong desire to fit in, and to be a "nice girl", but deep inside her there was a desire to be different and find her own way.

Her mother, although quite traditional, was supportive of Mabel's individual pursuits, while her dad drew a path for her. She was expected to be a lawyer or a doctor and raise the standard of living of the family through her academic success. Her father resented Mabel's attempts to break the mold and to experiment with new things. He interpreted her behavior as attention seeking and scandalous.

Soon enough Mabel was exposed to sexism in Peruvian society. At some point she wanted to become a radio personality, so she snuck out of high school and registered for broadcasting lessons. One of her instructors was particularly encouraging and committed to get Mabel a job at a very popular radio station. She visited him at the station several times to see if he was able to find a gig for her. During one of those visits, he took Mabel to a nearby park and while grabbing her leg, indicated that a condition of getting the job was to sleep with him. Mabel was "shocked, confused, and furious." After this incident, Mabel abandoned her dream to work in broadcasting.

Mabel felt disappointed with the way she was treated by significant males in her life and disgruntled with the class and racial divisions of Peruvian society. She realized that she lived in a male dominated culture that "valued women as objects to possess and not as subjects of their own lives." A culture that told women "what to wear and how to behave" and promoted distrust towards "anyone who looked different." Male domination was intertwined with class divisions, racism, and inequality that further limited the options of women like her, women perceived as rebelling against their assigned gender roles.

Mabel was ready to leave Collique.

Becoming a Punk

In 1985, Peruvians were electing a new president while facing the most violent guerrilla insurgency in Latin America, the Maoist/Polpotian Shining Path, and grappling with rising unemployment and inflation. The Shining Path was operating through the highlands and some areas in the jungle (where coca and drug trafficking was taking place). Power outages provoked by the Shining Path were common occurrences. A second guerrilla, Che Guevara style, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) was also engaging in subversive activities in Lima. People lived in permanent fear. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the year before, 1984, the year the Peruvian punk movement was born, turned out to be the year that reported the highest number of deaths and disappearances during the two decades this conflict lasted.

There was not much of a future for young people entering the labor force in a segregated and class divided society, especially for somebody like Mabel. Peruvians were ready for change. The young (36 years old) and (then considered) radical Alan García, a sort of "Latin America's Kennedy," was elected president with a platform that conveyed a message of hope and inclusion with slogans like "My commitment is to all Peruvians," "a government for all," and "a different future." During his campaign, he avoided the rhetoric of class divisions, which was dominant in the political discourse then.

Mabel was entering adulthood and feeling politically disenfranchised. She could see there were not a lot of opportunities for young people, for females and especially for those interested in the arts. At that time she was writing articles for the cultural section of a local newspaper. The subterráneos

were thriving. The founding bands had already released three DIY tapes: Narcosis's *First Dosage*, the collective *Volume 1*, and Autopsia's *System and Power*. She wanted to understand what was happening within this movement and decided to write a piece about it.

One of the first subterráneos Mabel met was Jorge P. He led her into this alternative world. Jorge provided a space in his family home for countercultural artists that constituted "Taller NN" a few years later. This collective provided installations and other visual work for alternative theatre, cinema, literary, and subterráneo events.

Jorge and Mabel became friends and soon enough a couple. Jorge's place was always busy with people engaging in artistic activities. Mabel became a subterránea. She found it liberating to immerse herself into this counterculture:

> *I felt I could create my own identity, throw out the window all societal norms, beliefs and expectations. I did not have to please anybody but myself. I was able to express my defiance towards parental rules and a conservative society artistically: through music, visual arts and poetry. Anything was possible. I felt particularly defiant against gender norms. It was a very empowering time for me.*

Mabel's new friends expressed through music, performance, and plastic arts their political thinking. Some were pacifists, other anarchists, others socialists. She identified herself as a nihilist. She "could see the bullshit of the entire political spectrum" and did not want to be part of it. She started reading and exchanging literature about this subject with friends and her disenchantment towards the political system grew deeper.

Dress-up to Mess-up

In 1977, after a trip to London, a columnist of *Gente*, a popular frivolous weekly magazine in Lima, reported the rise of punk as "the ultimate youth fashion." He wrote that punks were "smelly, dressed in rags, falling into vulgarity," and emerged from King's Road looked like coming "out of hell." The columnist wondered how fast punk would take to arrive to the capital of Peru.

Punk clothing and style would take time to take roots in Lima. Upper middle class youth were the first to adopt punk fashion. Most of them would acquire their clothing during their trips abroad, particularly in London. Others would search in their grandparents' closets to assemble "vintage" looks or visit Kaos, a store specializing in punk and New Wave accessories. The first media reports of youngsters displaying clothes with punk influences date to 1982. The male punk uniform was noticeable in 1985: hand painted t-shirts with names of their favorite bands, bleached ripped jeans, leather jackets, and military style boots (imported Doc Martens for those coming from higher income families, boots worn by those enlisted for mandatory military service for others). Later on clothing and other punk paraphernalia could be found in informal markets such as Polvos Azules in downtown Lima.

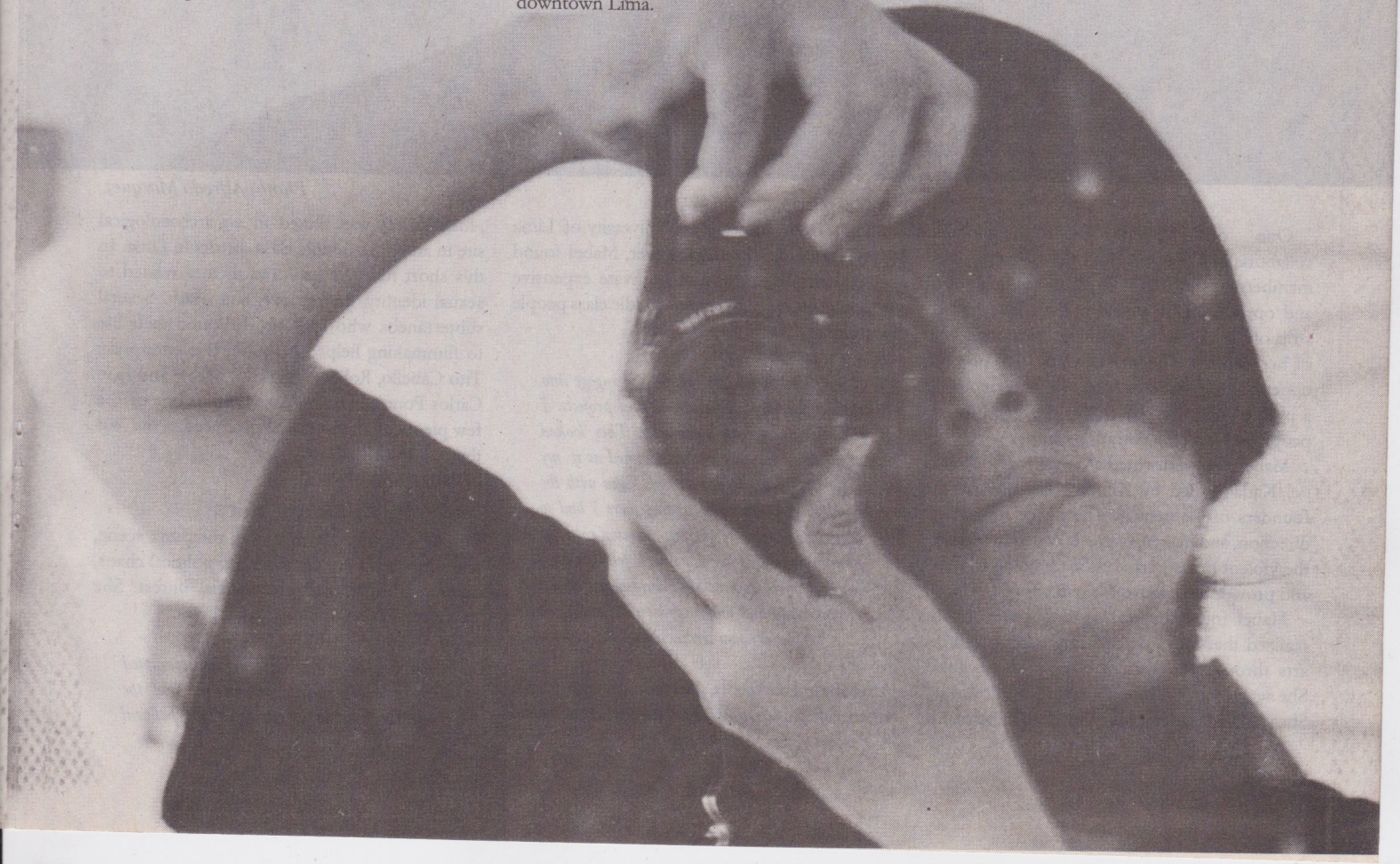
Mabel embraced the punk look immediately:

> *I went through a huge transformation. I looked very much like a "nice girl" wearing pink crotchet tops and cute mainstream outfits. Soon after I joined, I left my budding journalist and conformist identity for the rebelliousness and rather visceral punk look.*

Inspired by Lulu, the dancer and prostitute in the 1929 German film *Pandora's Box* (*Die Büchse der Pandora*), Mabel adopted a bob haircut. Poet Roger Santivañez named her "Mabel, casket head" ("Mabel, cabeza de casco") after seeing the new haircut, and proceeded to compose a poem on a paper napkin, a poem that Roger recited out loud every time he saw Mabel. The nickname stuck on as a term of endearment.

Mabel complemented her haircut with a red French beret, vibrant red lips, a long black shirt, and Chinese cotton shoes. This style raised some eyebrows in Lima, a society that was wounded by the political violence of a Maoist guerrilla group:

> *Some people questioned why I was wearing Chinese clothing. For me, they were missing the point. I dressed this way because I was embracing "existentialist fashion": developing my own individuality through resistance. I was choosing how to be and to relate to the world. Besides, I had worn Chinese cotton shoes since I was a child. They were cheap, comfortable and quite DIY.*



In the search of "creating her own personal aesthetic", a unique style in a city ridden by conformity (even today!), Mabel experimented with different looks, from very "feminine" to more masculine. She cut her hair really short (something not very common among young females in Lima at that time) and layered it in shades of pink, orange, and green. Not the typical image of a young woman in conservative Lima.

Mabel built her own signature wardrobe. She had the advantage of being the daughter of a seamstress, so, it was in her blood to sew and build patterns, and it fit with the DIY spirit of the subterráneos. For her clothing, she gathered recycled materials in working class wholesale markets such as La Parada or Gamarra. A typical middle class señorita would have not been permitted to visit those places, as they were considered "dangerous" in the '80s. There she bought clothing in men's stores carrying shoes and hats from bygone eras. At one point Mabel and another female subterránea decided to put together an alternative/underground fashion show. The objective was to display her "creativity, audacity and disregard for what others would think." However, this dream did not crystalize. Ultimately, she and her friend could not find a venue to exhibit the clothes.

Although this transformation was very exciting and contributed to build her identity, Mabel´s childhood friends in Collique were not impressed:

> *My friends and neighbors could not recognize me as the person they knew before. My older brother was very upset because I was damaging his reputation. His friends gossiped and called me "crazy Mabel" because I looked so different and foreign to them. I honestly didn't care much about what they thought, but it deeply irritated me when I heard them insulting and calling me names on the streets.*

Mabel remember times when she felt physically threatened because of her appearance:

> *I remember the time when I looked quite androgynous and some teens threw stones at me. They wanted to give me a lesson for not being the kind of woman I was supposed to be. They just couldn't understand my point of view. Their beliefs about gender roles were so ingrained that anything different was deviant, a threat that needed to be eradicated, even if that meant to be violent to a young female.*

More Than Somebody's Girlfriend

Mabel did not want to be known solely "as the girlfriend of a punk guy." She ultimately wanted to do her own thing, so she engaged in different forms of artistic expressions. She contributed with a fanzine called *Fusion* (*Fusión*); she rehearsed as a singer with a band, and became a performer.

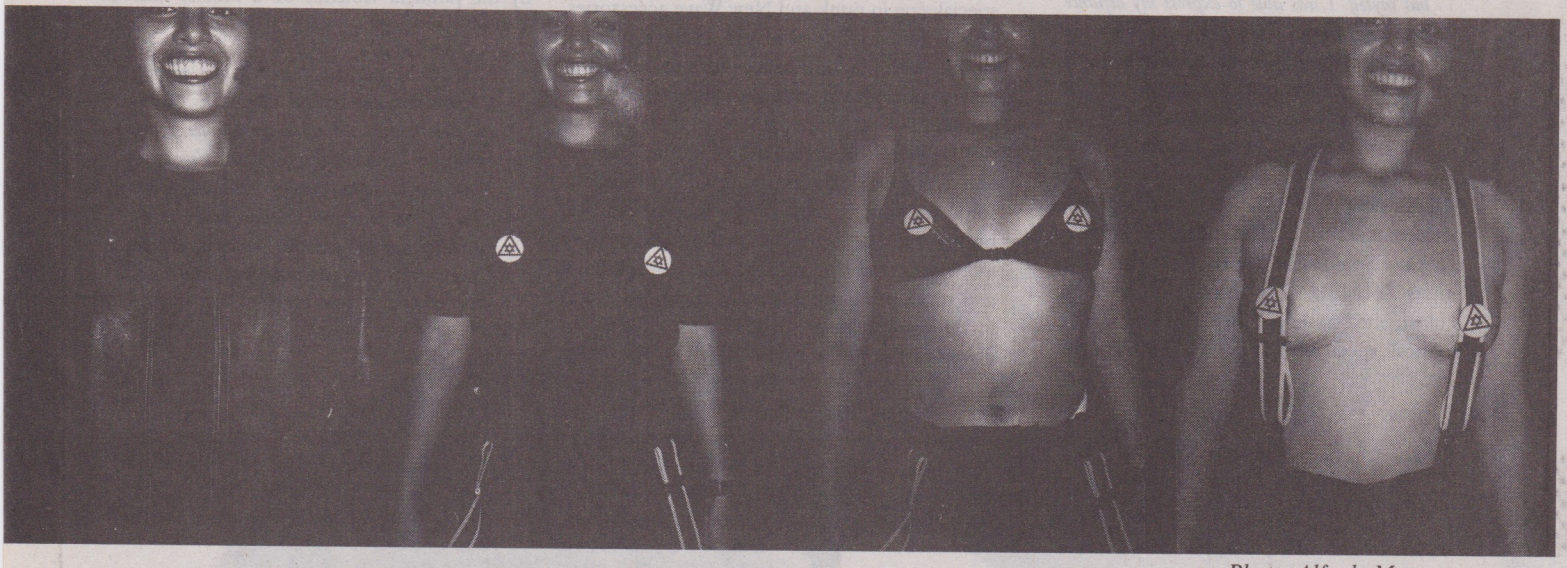


Photo: Alfredo Marquez

One of Mabel's most memorable collaborations was a photo performance with members of Taller NN to illustrate the control and oppression of sexual politics. She had to strip off layers of her clothing (meaning layers of her identity). The final take was to display her upper body covered only by two pins depicting a pink triangle (similar to those pegged to gay people in Nazi concentration camps).

Mabel also performed a dance for La Banda del Kadalzo (led by Kimba Vilis, one of the founders of Leusemia). The dance moves, art direction, and makeup were designed to re-enact the violent times Peruvians were going through and provide a narrative for reflection.

Mabel found her calling doing videos. She realized that they could "bring together all the arts through the ancient way of storytelling." She wanted to become "a female Almodóvar." She studied cinema in the Taller Armando Robles Godoy and later on University of Lima (Universidad de Lima). However, Mabel found her experience studying in a private expensive university attended by upper-middle class people frustrating:

> *It was hard to get into groups and engage into student life, or collaborate in film projects. I felt alienated by my classmates. They looked at me as if I didn't exist. It seemed as if my sole presence would upset them. Even with the handful of punks who studied there I had to argue really hard to get into director roles for film projects. At some point I felt I wasn't learning anything new. So, I decided to drop out of university and make my own art videos, in my own terms, DIY.*

After she left university, she made an experimental video called *Accessible Transparency* (*Transparencia Accessible*). It was filmed in an archaeological site in an upper-middle class district in Lima. In this short film she explored themes related to sexual identity, desire, love, and death. Several subterráneos who later on dedicated their life to filmmaking helped Mabel in this enterprise: Tito Cabello, Roberto "Jarkor" Barba, and Juan Carlos Ponce de León. This video is one of the few pieces of the work she produced in the '80s that has not been lost.

Fleeing Peru

During the time Mabel was in the punk scene, she witnessed Peru descend into political chaos, economic crisis, and great social unrest. She describes this environment as follows:

> *I witnessed intense struggle between corrupted [democratically elected] governments and the guerrillas wanting to overthrow the political*

system. Civilians were caught in the middle of this war, their lives were affected by this unprecedented violence that reached mostly the poor and vulnerable, young people, and anyone who dared to speak out in dissent to either the government or the guerrillas.

Many subterráneos were among the thousands of Peruvians who left Peru in the late '80s in search of a brighter future. They were escaping hyperinflation, unemployment, and political violence. Members of foundational bands, like Leo Escoria (Leusemia) and Espátula Venérea (Autopsia) were among the first to leave.

At some point being a subterráneo became not only a symbol of rebellion against a conservative society, but a potential target for the counterinsurgency. Some subterráneos fled Peru because they were suspected of being affiliated with the Shining Path or the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). Several were detained just because of their appearance, like María T-ta and Kike and Denis (Eutanasia) in 1986. Others were killed because they were actively involved in subversive activities, like Alfredo T. (Seres Van) and Beni Gil (Polución Nocturna) in 1989.

Mabel's boyfriend immigrated to the US in 1991. They promised each other that they would reunite somewhere in Europe. Although most of the time Mabel felt protected from the oppressive gender roles so engrained in Peruvian society, there were times, especially after her boyfriend left in 1991, that she felt that her behavior, particularly her sexual behavior, was judged by other subterráneos, and she felt isolated.

After Jorge left, Mabel was asked to leave her boyfriend's family home where members of Taller NN used to gather. The family had prejudices towards her independence. Her behavior was considered inappropriate for a young female, and as a result, disrespectful to the family: "They thought I was being sexually loose, which I wasn't at all. At least not at that particular time…"

Mabel rented a room "in a decrepit house" near the archaeological site where she made one of her experimental videos. There, she became a single female subterránea living by herself and enjoying her freedom. However, rumors about her "loose" sexual morals started to spread among the subterráneos. They were generated by males she considered friends. She felt "betrayed and angry." She felt marginalized not only by society, but also from those who criticized it.

In September of 1992 the head of the Shining Path, Abimael Guzmán, was captured together with key member of his central committee. It was a deadly blow for this guerrilla group. Although subversive activities diminished significantly after the capture of Guzmán, the government of Alberto Fujimori continued its counterinsurgency strategy and embarked in a sort of "witch hunt." The targets were those who were considered to have "radical" political ideals. Public universities continue to be under surveillance and intervened by the armed forces. Many students were arrested. Subterráneos were also considered suspects of "terrorist" activities. They were incarcerated for years without a trial, friends of Mabel among them. The underground punk scene went literally underground. Mabel felt the urge to leave.

Mabel arrived in San Francisco in January 1993. She learned seventeen years later that a police special intelligence unit confiscated the pictures of her photo performance with Taller NN in 1994. This happened when a member of this collective was wrongly charged and incarcerated for being a member of the Shining Path. This artist was pardoned after serving four years in a maximum security prison.

Once in San Francisco, and after marrying Jorge, she came to the realization that distance had an adverse effect on their relationship:

We kept breaking up and coming back together during the two years that we were apart. We got married in San Francisco, but things didn't work within us. We split for good soon and my tourist visa was about to expire. I remained in the US and became an out of status undocumented immigrant.

Not only did her relationship quickly fall apart, Mabel's hopes to be part of what she considered a vibrant punk scene in the Bay Area fell apart too. She found barriers unable to cross. She perceived that she was not accepted:

People didn't seem to give a damn because I looked punk. I think my English skills and my brown color were the reasons that kept me away from integrating into the punk scene in San Francisco. I met some welcoming Latino punks and Martin Sorrondeguy (Los Crudos), but I had to leave San Francisco after my tourist visa had expired. I moved to Hawaii; I had to make tough decisions to survive as an undocumented young female. Things changed quickly and my punk identity dissolved into ashes.

From Punk to Personal Documentary Filmmaker

I am passionate about documentary filmmaking because it has the potential to move others towards social impact and bettering society.

The process of directing and producing a personal documentary was not what Mabel was expecting. The film has turned out to be quite different from what she originally envisioned. However, the aesthetic of the film rescues, "sometimes in full force," DIY elements of the underground punk scene she once belonged to.

Following the advice of her mentors, the concept behind *Prodigal Daughter* was influenced by personal documentaries where family and homeland history were central to the story, including *Daughter of Danang* by Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco and *First Person Plural* by Deann Borshay Liem. Other documentaries that contributed to her work were *Stories We Tell* by the Canadian Sarah Polley, the personal films of Alan Berliner, and the work of Mexican-American filmmaker Lourdes Portillo with whom she "even had a dream of being inside one of her film scenes in an Arizona-like desert, if you can believe it".

During the making of her film, Mabel has deliberated about moving back to Peru to continue her career as a filmmaker there. However, she almost immediately could see the difficulties the film community faces there, particularly on the financial front, and decided to remain in the US. Nevertheless, she is committed to rescuing some of the Peruvian stories waiting to be told, stories that could provide a voice to forgotten communities, and develop them to appeal to wider audiences.

Prodigal Daughter is a first-person account that took six years to become reality. During the film you will see her efforts to reconcile with her family, to rediscover her roots in the Peruvian punk scene, and to find insights about who she really is. Mabel seeks to be authentic and let everyone "speak his or her truth." It is an intimate story that explores some of the social and mental health issues faced by immigrant women from the perspective of an undocumented female and their vulnerable position in a foreign country without roots, without a voice and support.

Mabel hopes this personal documentary "contributes to opening up the dialogue about immigration, identity and finding healing through art journaling." My feeling is that this hope is fully met.

Mabel is currently wrapping up production and beginning the post-production process. For more information about the film, go to the Prodigal Daughter *website (bilingual) and follow her through social media:*
prodigaldaughterthemovie.com
facebook.com/prodigaldaughter.hijaprodiga
twitter.com/prodigalhija

TERMINAL NATION "WASTED" 7"
M.I.T.E "LOST SESSIONS" LP
FUCK YOU PAY ME "PUBLIC DISGRACE" LP
TO THE POINT/SIDETRACKED 7"
CAVE STATE "MANFERIOR" 7"
LIFESPITE 7"
FRACTURED "DELAPIDATED" 7"
FAST ASLEEP "OUTSIDE THE FENCE" 7"
REPROACH/CITIZENS PATROL 7"
LOW THREAT PROFILE "PRODUCT #3" 7"
EXTORTION "SICK" 12"
PHOBIA "GRIND CORE" 7"
MITB "ABUNDANCE OF GUNS" 10"
WEEKEND NACHOS-"STILL" LP
CALLOUS "FUCKING USELESS" 7"
MITB/BIZAAR UPROAR SPLIT 10"
COLD WORLD / HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH LP
NO COMMENT "LIVE ON KXLU 1992" 7"
PICK YOUR SIDE / TO THE POINT 10"
BASTARD NOISE / LACK OF INTEREST LP/CD
MAN IS THE BASTARD / BLEEDING RECTUM LP
NAUSEA "CONDEMNED TO THE SYSTEM" LP
WEEKEND NACHOS "UNFORGIVABLE" LP
LOW THREAT PROFILE "PRODUCT #1" 7"
NOISEAR "TURBULENT RESURGENCE" LP
MAN IS THE BASTARD/AUNT MARY 10"
BASTARD NOISE "THE PROGRESSION OF SICKNESS" 10"
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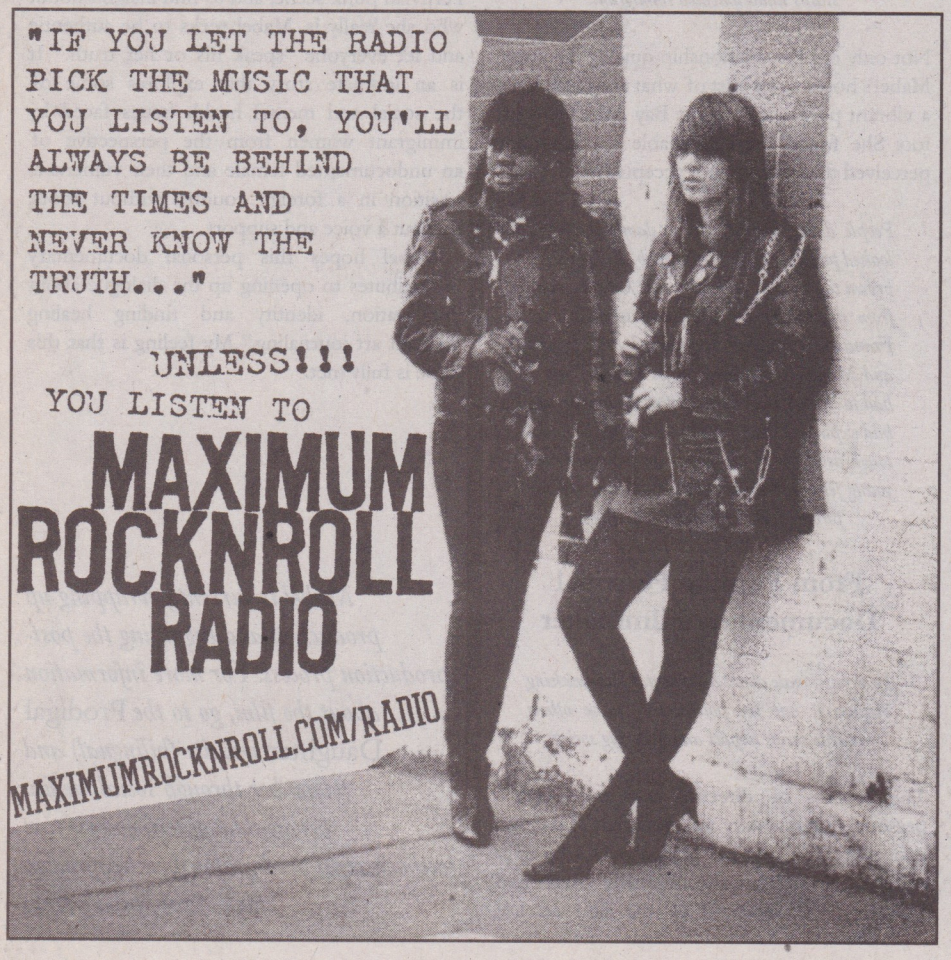

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EX-YUGO SPECIAL PART II

MRR #378 was an Ex-Yugo special issue, organized by Habi, the man behind NE! Records, and Lydia Athanasopolous, former content coordinator of the mag. They're back for round two, with an examination of seven punk bands from the former Yugoslavia. Are you an expert on a particular era of punk history that deserves more attention? Get in touch about doing regional features:
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KAOS

Kaos belongs to the second generation of punk bands from Rijeka (north Croatia), after Paraf and Termiti. In the beginning, Kaos sounded like a classic '77 punk band, but with time they changed their sound and became one of the most authentic ex-Yu punk bands ever. With an energetic, fierce woman on vocals, effective synth-punk pop songs, imaginative lyrics and visual appearance made them a very interesting and prominent new band. Despite the band's originality, striking appearance, and attention, there was no vinyl release. This could perhaps be attributed to the band's unwillingness to be changed and adapted to something more commercial. The interview was conducted with Kaos singer Tea in her flat in Copenhagen and with Kaos bass player Robi over the phone from Rijeka.

Interview by Peter Berghard. Introduction by Habi. Pictures from Kaos and NE! Records archives.

MRR: Kaos was a part of the Rijeka scene. Can you highlight some specifics about the scene?

Tea: The Rijeka scene was really strong at the end of the '70s and in the beginning of the '80s. We were all young and had a need to expressing our thoughts and feelings about the society we lived in. The scene consisted of a large number of great bands, photographers, journalists, painters, illustrators, tailors creating "punk" accessories, all kinds of creative people. I remember warm friendships and good relationships between bands. To me the Rijeka scene was more than just a music scene!

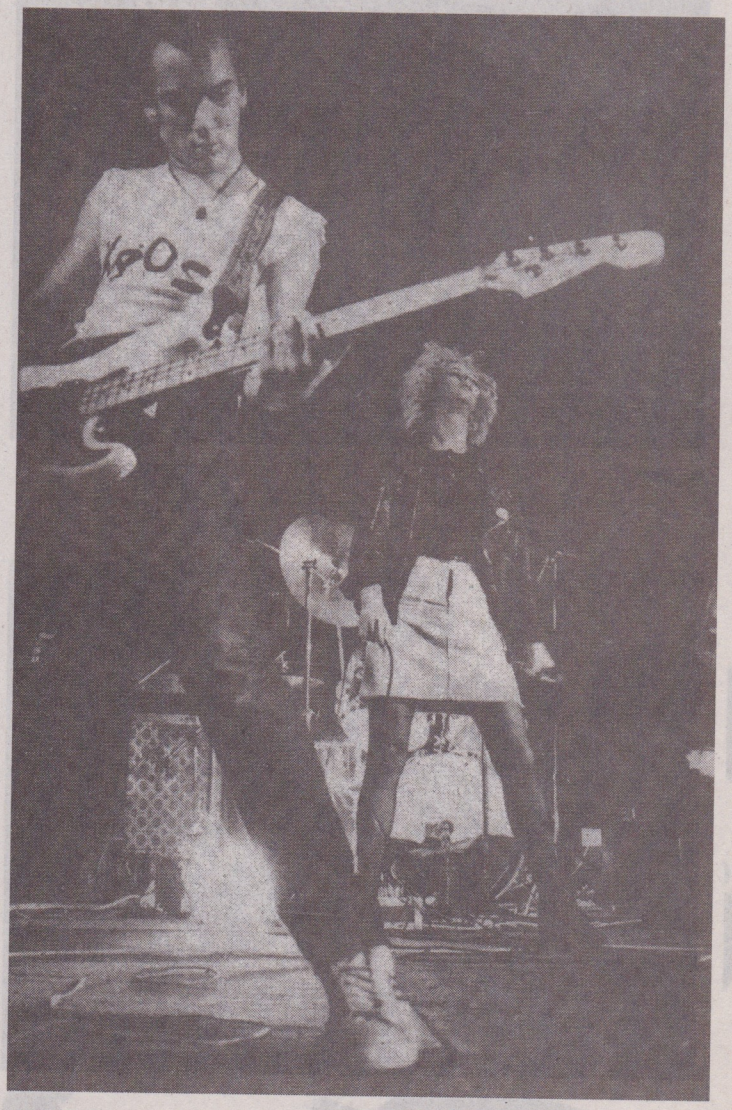
MRR: What was your most memorable concert, and why?

Robi: One I remember in particular was our very first concert in Rijeka, on June 25, 1980, at Narodna Čitaonica (The Peoples Library Concert Hall) because of the fantastic atmosphere. Another great concert was in Slovenia in a small club where the concert turned into a giant party. The audience wanted us to go on and on while a lot of beer was brought to the stage. So we played our Kaos repertory probably eight times in a row! It was an unforgettable concert! We ended up returning most of the beer, sharing it with the crowd.

MRR: What are the songs about? And do you have any personal favorites?
Tea: Well, it's not so easy to point out only one or two songs. For example, the "Uzbuna" (Alarm) song describes the feeling of desolation and alienation living in a land of prohibitions. The song doesn't give you any answers or tell you what to do. Numerous prohibitions are being mentioned: *"Forbidden to watch, forbidden to cry, forbidden to walk, forbidden to love, forbidden to put up posters..."* and statements like *"Do not disobey, do not smoke, do not talk"* are made. It's for you to interpret.

In the "Nova Bolest" (New Disease) song, you get an impression of what it's like to live in a sort of twilight zone while waiting for something or someone. Doing nothing, just waiting. It has a kind of *Waiting for Godot* feeling about it.
Robi: The songs are mainly about alienation, uniformity of people, and the feeling of lifelong running around in circles. *"How much longer until the signal, how much longer until the end?"* or *"The robots are here, but where are the people?"* etc.

MRR: Kaos have a very recognizable sound. Was it a sound you consistently worked towards?
Robi: We started out as a typical garage punk band; fuzz guitar, pumping bass, and speedy drums, which was great in the beginning. But we soon felt that we wanted to develop our sound. We wanted to keep the power and the speed, but at the same time we wanted something more experimental, which is why a Farfisa keyboard was introduced.



MRR: At some point Kaos started to use a drum machine. Why this change?
Robi: We had already used a drum machine for our rehearsals and at some point, when we didn't have a drummer, we decided to continue using the machine. We were delighted, but some of our fans were not so fond of it to begin with.
Tea: I remember the first time we used it live, people were surprised that we played without a drummer. But after one or two songs, the idea was fully accepted.

MRR: In what way did time and music affect you as individuals?
Tea: The times were different back then. There was a kind of "behind the wall" atmosphere about it. Once we watched *The Wall* by Pink Floyd in Palach (a music club in Rijeka) and I felt a bit sad—realizing that, all in all, this movie was also about me and my generation living here. It's no secret that the police in the former Yugoslavia didn't have much sympathy for punks. I remember once after a concert, the police were waiting for me. They actually wanted me to explain what our song "Color" was about!

The punk movement meant everything to me. It gave me the possibility to express my desperation, my fears, my anger, my longing for a better world.

MRR: What about your look, Tea?
Tea: I definitely spent more time in front of the mirror

in those days than I do today [*laughs*]. But to stand out obviously had a price when you lived in a relatively small community. Some people were not so tolerant. Some shouted and pointed fingers at us.
It was not too popular to be different, but in a way I didn't care.

MRR: Why didn't Kaos release an album back in those days?
Tea: We released a DIY demo tape with the early songs, called *Kaos Kuca Na Vrata* (*Kaos Knocks on the Door*). And as I recall, a certain record company was interested, but they asked us if we could change the lyrics, the music, my way of singing, and my look.
Robi: Yes, we had sent demos to several publishing houses, there were only about five or six at that time, and it was always the same story..."Your music is too fast," "Could you change the lyrics a bit?" "Could you play a bit softer?" "Could you change this and that?" They even asked us where our "love songs" were. *[laughs]*
Tea: We were not ready for any compromises at all. It was "take it or leave it!" I guess that was the main reason why we didn't release an album back then. The good thing, though, was that we kept all our copyrights.

MRR: Have Kaos since made any official releases?
Tea: Yes. A triple album anthology, *Rijecki Novi Val* (*Rijeka New Wave*), was released by Dallas Records in 2008. Kaos is represented with three songs; "Samo Prvom Klasom," "Roboti," and "Uzbuna." In 2010 we released the CD *Kaos 1979–1984* on our own label (KAOS Produkcija Rijeka) and two years later, in 2012, the LP *Betonska Djeca* (*Concrete Children*) was released by Swedish NE! Records.

MRR: How did the idea of releasing your old songs come up?
Tea: We had noticed an increasing interest in our music. People who loved music from the early '80s started to post old Kaos live recordings on YouTube. There were stories about Kaos on different web pages and in blogs. Some started to ask where they could get the music. All this triggered us to collect our old magnetic tapes and have them digitalized. And, just in time you might say, as the tapes had started to crumble and vanish.

MRR: In relation to your artwork, which strongly underlines the Kaos image, who was the artist behind that?
Tea: Zvonimir Pliskovac created the artwork. He produced posters, labels, booklets, badges, and T-shirts for us. A minimalistic and yet powerful expression, mostly using only two colors and a couple of stains. I think he captured the spirit of the band in a great way.

MRR: Can we hope for a Kaos reunion?
All: No! [*Laughs*]

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KUD IDIJOTI

KUD Idijoti (Cultural Artistic Society for Idiots) was a punk band from Pula, Croatia, established in 1981. Yet because of the frequent changes in the band structure, their presence remained relatively unnoticed outside of Pula. After stabilizing the lineup in 1986, they became very successful, surprising everyone as the first punk band to win the first prize of the biggest festival for new bands in ex-Yu (Youth Music Festival, Subotica, 1987). They became the leading punk band and would leave the biggest mark on the second half of the '80s and '90s in the ex-Yu countries. The guys stepped on the festival stage and conquered it with great energy, quickly becoming a live attraction that had to be seen. They played everywhere in ex-Yu, but also outside. In 2011 came the shattering news that Branko Črnac "Tusta," the singer and great front-personality, was fighting cancer. The news spread quickly and soon it was no longer just his fight...People from all over ex-Yu participated in supporting him. Unfortunately it did not end well, and Tusta died in October 2012. His death also ended KUD Idijoti. Although it has been some time since then, it still took awhile for me to persuade guitarist Sale Veruda to do this interview.

Questions by Habi. Pictures from the NE! Records and KUD Idijoti archives.

MRR: Not so long ago your band, Saša 21, released their first album. How were the reactions and are you happy with it?

The first people who heard the album all agreed—they said that the more they listened, the better the album became. The first official reviews are also great; we are getting high grades. For me, I basically managed to do all that I wanted to do; if there was more money and time, I would've improved a couple of things, but those are all details that don't really affect the overall picture and impression of the album. And the question is, if anyone but me would've heard the difference…

MRR: The material on the album was recorded about a decade ago. Why did you wait so long to release it?

Hm, that's a long story. I didn't just "wait." I know it sounds unbelievable, but all this time I was working on the album. The main problem was there from the get-go: the material had to be recorded hastily because the drummer we had back then was moving away from Pula to Krk. I thought I would be able to fix it later on and, well, that was a dire mistake. The improvement process took a long time due to personal issues and minor bumps in the road. The death of my parents and close friends and colleagues, a split in a marriage and

MI SMO OVDJE

KUD IDIJOTI

SAMO ZBOG PARA

the creation of a new one, the birth of children, a move (including my studio that was in the process of being built), all sorts of faults in machinery, etc. etc... And on top of that, Tustin was diagnosed with cancer and his struggle with the sickness—no one knew how long it would go on or what the outcome would be. Already in the second half of the year that the material was recorded, March 2004, I was in contact with labels regarding the release of the album. During that time the situation in the music business changed drastically, at least here. If I had wanted to release it just like that, it would've been released earlier. But I've been stubborn, I haven't lost focus, and I haven't lowered my quality standards. I tweaked something every time I had the opportunity and I believe that we've improved the tracks maximally. Yes, it did take some time. Really it's amazing that such a happy and optimistic album has such a heavy karma. If someone gave me one dollar for each working hour, I would be a rich man, ha ha.

MRR: Is this just the continuation of your work with KUD Idijoti? Why did you want to start Saša 21?

Saša 21 was my solo project that started my desire to record some of my old songs. Our former bassist from KUD Idijoti had to have an operation on his spine in 2003 and I wanted to use that time, as no one knew how long he would be out of commission. And that was why I gathered a group of musicians, learned the material, and went into the studio. Here we have another element... Even though it seemed like KUD Idijoti played simple music, most of the time that wasn't the case. There're several examples ("Rodna Gruda" from *Cijena Ponosa*). And I really wanted to play a *simple* album and it seemed like that was impossible with KUD Idijoti. That's why I started Saša 21, with the goal to make an album with those songs. And see, the album is here and my goal was reached.

The answer to your first question: strictly musically speaking, it's not so different from KUD. My solo apples didn't fall so far from the tree. But the way I've been working is completely different. After everything that happened today, Saša 21 is my only and main musical occupation.

MRR: KUD Idijoti was founded as early as 1981, but I would dare say that your breakthrough was after the youth festival in Subotica in 1987. News about your winnings at the festival spread like wildfire. I can't remember anyone before you experiencing anything like that. I remember even I thought that it was a big thing, as you were a punk band, which without a doubt made it even cooler. What are your memories from Subotica in 1987?

Yes, the band worked hard, but the lineup wasn't stabilized until autumn 1985, and that energy and compactness began to show results. It's little known that in 1986 we auditioned for the festival but got rejected. And the year after that, we won. Back in the day, Subotica was the largest nationwide festival in ex-Yu. It was an excellent springboard for getting noticed in media, for all competitors but especially for the winners. The news about our victory really did explode in all of SFRJ and mostly because of our name, KUD Idijoti: Kulturno Umjetničko Društvo Idijoti (Cultural Artistic Society of Idiots) from Pula! That was interesting for everybody—who are these weird people? And on top of that we were a punk band. Unbelievable...

MRR: How was it before 1985? You had, after all, recorded a demo back in 1982. What happened between those years?

That was a time with a lot of change in the lineup, someone constantly leaving the band and new members replacing them. The first demo was recorded mostly for internal use, so that the new members could hear the music and to make the process of learning the songs easier. At that time we knew that the bassist wanted to leave and that we'd have to look for another one, and the singer had already left the band until further notice, so I had to sing on that demo. That you can find it today on the internet is the result of human insolence and technological opportunities. There couldn't be a worse combination (every idiot can upload anything). As a consequence of these changes, we recorded another demo in

1984 with Nenad Marković behind the microphone (today he leads Narada Projekt). We were looking forward to hearing the new voice of the band. With him as front man, the band grew even more. Marković was attractive and funny at concerts and the audience loved him, but after two-and-a-half years he left the band. I thought I would have to stand behind the microphone again, ha ha…

MRR: How did Tusta end up being your singer?
Now we're arriving at the key moment! After Marković left and the band was standing on shaky legs, every day was turbulent. I remembered that a few years before I had a rehearsal with Tusta and that he was a really good singer. He didn't sing actively, and he hadn't been part of any bands, but on these rehearsals he could do an exact imitation of Brian Johnson from the group Geordie and we had even tried playing a couple of their songs (I will let you explore the rest of that story yourselves…). And so, one day Tusta came to the pub Pula with *Polet* (a youth magazine) under his arm, in jeans and long hair. I invited him over to our table and asked if he wanted to listen to our demo. I told him that we were looking for a singer. He didn't rush at the chance. He said that he first wanted to hear some of our material. He called a couple of days later, impressed. It was energetic, melodic and he wanted to sing! The rest you more or less know. In the autumn of 1985, the bassist Marjetto moved to America, where he lives until this day. We replaced him the same year and after that the band's lineup stabilized, for a few years anyway.

MRR: Soon after the festival in Subotica you released your first singles, all released during a short period of time. After that there were many LPs. Without a doubt the Subotica festival was a crucial point in your career. Why wasn't anything released earlier?
First of all, in the original lineup, the age difference was two years. I was two years older than the drummer and the bassist was two years older than me. So when the time for military service came it meant someone was always missing. Right when the bassist came back it was my turn…I came back and then the drummer left, and so…Because of that we were always changing our lineup and without a stable lineup a serious effort couldn't be made. So we started our more serious period in 1985. The period between 1981–85 I called "the period of incubation." Even though we recorded two demos and played whenever we could, because of the military service we moved forward with great effort.

The second negative aspect is the geographic location of Pula. Pula wasn't "next to the highway" so to speak. You either have to go to Pula, or leave Pula; you are never just passing through. We were outside the media center, far out on the periphery. We put in two or three times as much energy, money and time as the bands located in the big cities. But we were hardworking, young, optimistic, and full of humor. We recorded a demo, we made contact with a label called DID in Koper, which was one of the few independent labels in SFRJ. They also had a concert hall, where we played in 1986. The entire gig was recorded and, as the gig went surprisingly well, DID released the recording but exclusively on cassette. That was our first official release, called *Legendarni Uzivo* (*Legendary Live*), and it was thanks to this that we were able to play at Subotica. The rumor mill started running: *what sort of band is this that calls themselves "legendary" on their first album and on top of that, it's live? They called themselves KUD Idijoti with a "J." Are they illiterate and dumb or are they just pretending? We've heard that music coming from the asylum at the edge of town…* and so on. That last one was true, as the bassist was a nurse there and he arranged it so that we could play there. The rumors grew and Idijoti became more interesting, so the label offered to record a single, the band went to Subotica and won. After that we recorded another single, and another one, and then another live cassette tape…we went forward step by step.

MRR: Collaboration with the German label Incognito Records has resulted in the release of an LP with your singles and an unreleased demo. How did that collaboration with Barni come to be?
We played in Germany on a short tour, five or six cities. Back then that was a big curiosity, a punk band from the socialist Yugoslavia preforming in Europe! Barni Schmidt was at one of the gigs and he offered us an exchange: his punk cassettes for our three first singles. We agreed to this. It was interesting to hear that our records were going to be sold by him in Germany. Soon after that he called us with information that he was able to sell all of our records very fast and that there was an interest for Idijoti in Germany. He suggested that the LP should contain those three singles and that we release it as a compilation album for the German audience. Because of the relatively short length of the LP, we added three demo songs and that's how *Bolivia R'n'R* was created. Chronologically

that was our first big album, released in December 1989! It was big news locally, the surprise knew no bounds: their first cassette is live and their first album is released in Germany!

MRR: KUD Idijoti was known for your energetic gigs and a loyal audience who loved you. You have played all over ex-Yu and even in Europe. Any gigs that you hold especially dear?
We played before the Ramones in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on October 10, 1994, and we played with ANWL in Zagreb (Croatia) on April 28, 2007. I love and appreciate those bands so I hold those gigs dear. There were also huge festivals, like Exit, but also amazing atmospheres in smaller clubs with 100-200 people. It would really be a long list if I started counting them all.

MRR: What especially makes KUD Idijoti stand out is your clear objection to war in times when it wasn't easy to voice your objections. That resulted in prohibitions and bans from the media in Croatia. How did you experience this kind of treatment?
You can ask anyone who has had to deal with censorship: they use the same frame in each country and all systems. So the freethinkers, be that groups or individuals, the system goes in hard and crushes them under its heel. Depending on the harshness of the system and how dangerous the system judges these freethinkers, groups, or individuals to be, the system can get to the point where it physically liquidizes the freethinkers. On the lower level, they go in with censorship, intimidation, threats, etc. It's nothing new, is what I'm saying. After our interview in the magazine *Feral Tribune* in 1995, an unknown civilian threatened our singer with a bomb in the center of Pula. It's lucky that Tusta managed to stop him and no one was hurt, but that's an example of an intervention of an indoctrinated individual. But behind that lies the system. Sometimes the system wins, sometimes we win, it's a struggle that is going to continue until the end of the world and the galaxy implodes.

MRR: Yes, maybe that is the price of pride. But it is still encouraging that people recognize all that and that the album *Cijena Ponosa* (*The Price of Pride*) was such a big success.
Yes. Firstly, that album is also very well produced, on the highest level possible when talking about KUD Idijoti. Secondly, for the first time the band had a label in Croatia (Dancing Bear), which resulted in more support from the scene there. Thirdly, the war was starting to wane, it was almost over, and the first modest contact was made between Croatia and Serbia, who the day before had been fighting. In these careful trades it was logical that *Cijena Ponosa* would be the first album from Croatia to be licensed and released in Serbia, where KUD Idijoti were especially appreciated and popular.

MRR: Whose idea was it to collaborate with Gore Ušši Winettou? Not that surprising, but perhaps a bit unusual.
The one who initiated it was Franci Blašković: their singer, bassist, leader, and frontman. He came up with an idea that we should back him in the song "Turbo Catolico," which he wanted to record. Musically the bands were very different, but we were ideologically and politically likeminded. He is one of the few people who very courageously resisted the ideological, political, and spiritual darkness and robbing regime that Tudjman instituted, and because of that we respected him. We happily accepted his offer, but the rehearsals were so good that more songs were created one by one. That's how the album *Istra Ti Materina* happened. After that followed a tour on Istria, after which we slowly went our separate ways back to our own waters. Franci guested on *Cijena Ponosa*—he excellently sang the song "Blago" and played a bass solo. For that song we recorded a video and somewhere there the sporadic collaboration ended.

MRR: Not so long ago I read an

interesting article about Branko Črnac Tusta and, once again, became impressed with the simplicity of this person and his charisma. Many people, even the media in ex-Yu, have followed Tusta's fight against cancer. Say something of this period.

On the band's 30th birthday (February 2, 2011) we had a small party on Tusta's terrace and we made plans for the 30th anniversary of the band. Three weeks later he was diagnosed with throat cancer…Overnight everything fell apart. All plans, wishes, dreams, all of that took on another context and dimension. He sang with us for one concert in Slovenia, but after that he stopped all musical activities and spent time on healing. He continued to follow the band, he went shopping, read, worked, picked asparagus, went to concerts, but his healing was most primary. He was active on the internet, he was studying all sorts of similar cases to his and looked for a solution, he was in contact with a lot of people who knew more about this…

Keeping in mind that the doctor's prognosis was that his cancer could be eliminated and treated, there was a lot of optimism in the beginning. It seemed like Tusta was only sick temporarily. So we finished the already-booked concerts without him. Once again I was singing… Unfortunately, further tests showed that he had cancer in the lungs as well. And like the doctors predicted, the cancer in the throat was eliminated, but eventually he died from the cancer in the lungs.

He fought heroically all that time, and you can't diminish the support from the public. Beautiful wishes and loads of positive messages and letters came in, all that energy that was put in motion probably has some sort of effect. But, sadly, this opponent turned out to be invincible. At least Tusta put up tough resistance. At the same time a friend from school also fell ill; he became sick after Tusta, but died much earlier. He didn't put up half the fight that Tusta did.

MRR: After Tusta's death did you decide that KUD Idijoti should stop playing?

It turned out that this was too much stress for the rest of the band and everything started to come apart at the seams. Just a few months later the bassist left. For our last show on May 27, 2011, I managed to scrape together a lineup—my friend jumped in on bass and we were reduced to a trio. Once again I was singing; it was like that first gig thirty years ago…What horror. After that, the drummer left. All signs were there that I had gone full circle and that I needed to stop. If I had even the slightest chance to keep going, I would've fought, but everything had crumbled. One year later Tusta died. With that, the band physically stopped existing.

MRR: You are still faithful to the music and hopefully we can expect much from Saša 21. Are there any concrete future plans?

Yes, I am working and I plan to continue working. Only bad health or lack of money can stop me. Basically, the galaxy never closes all of its doors. There are always some that remain ajar. With Saša 21, we have recorded a new video for the song "Kratko I Konkretno" and I hope that we'll release something new next year. I won't be saying too much, but we're going forward, step by step…

For all questions regarding Saša 21 you can reach Sale at saleveruda@gmail.com. Questions regarding KUD Idijoti won't be answered. He can't take any more.

LUBLANSKI PSI

"They say it's going to rain on Saturday," Mario Šelih said when I called him and asked for an interview.

"Oh, really?" I said politely, but thought, "So what?! We are not going to sit outside in this shitty weather, are we?"

But we did sit outside. The guy smokes. Seeing this, I thought "OK, I think I can survive half an hour of this cold." Because half an hour was how much time I expected our interview to last.

But I was wrong. It lasted three hours. And would have lasted even more if I hadn't already been running late for some other appointment.

He is Mario Šelih, singer of legendary Slovenian—used to be Yugoslavian—punk band Lublanski Psi.

I have to admit that I was a bit scared to do this interview. Leave it aside that I don't like doing interviews at all. People can be really mean sometimes. And that's one of the things I heard about him...that he can be a little mean. Also that he can be a pain in the ass, that he's highly self-important, and more. Probably a consequence of a good looking reputation when he was younger. He was hated and envied by some guys, and just the opposite by the ladies. In case any of the ladies reading this are wondering, I assure you he still has it.

But that's not why I met Mario. I met him to talk about Lublanski Psi, prior to the re-release of legendary Slovenian punk compilation *Lepo je...* for Ne! Records.

We met in some local bar near his home. He says about himself that he's lazy, so our arrangement suited him well, since he wasn't very enthusiastic about the whole thing when I called him. But on the other hand, I see he's also a bit flattered. That he and his band still mean something, that they are still remembered.

"We practice again," he tells me as soon we settle in our chairs outside. I didn't know that. "Yes," he continues. "Maybe we will have a female singer as well. She's coming to rehearsals on Thursday." I ease myself. This doesn't look like it's going to go badly. But although all this talk about a reunion sounds interesting, I want to hear about the old days. But he seems reluctant to talk about it. It's understandable. Punk, of course, was not a very popular thing with the authorities, and some punks really got the shitty end of the stick. Mario among them. He was even in jail. Three or four months. He was treated very badly. And all this because somebody, a dope-selling friend as he learned lately, wanted to save his ass and pointed his finger at Mario instead.

There is also another aspect as to why he doesn't like to talk about it. It is in the past. That was some other time. Mario simply thinks that punk is dead, and that whatever is done in this manner today should be called some different name. I tried to convince him that not much has changed. We still need punk nowadays, and as long as punks are alive, punk itself is alive too. He agrees after a few moments of silence, but can't understand why everybody is so quiet then. In those days you went out and did something. Today everybody is watching TV, YouTube, or playing with a smartphone. For him, punk was destruction. Not brotherhood. It is a strictly individual path. "If you agree with me, OK. If not, go fuck yourself and go your own way and start your own revolution. Ask Pankrti what is punk." When I tell him I'm not sure they are the right address for that—since they said in a *Maximum Rocknroll* interview that they played punk because they thought it was some sort of new popular music which was going to be played in discotheques—he just swings his arm.

It is obvious he has high regard for Pankrti to this day. Pankrti were older and smarter. They knew exactly what they were doing. They were careful. Not like Mario and his peers who were around seventeen and thought nobody could harm them. "Pankrti did a revolution. And Igor Vidmar," he says. "Pankrti in this territory are like the Sex Pistols in England," he continues. "They are something different. First there was Pankrti, and then everything else."

Punk rockers were scarce at that time. Those who were got their weekly dosage of punk by listening to Igor Vidmar's show on Radio Študent and by visiting Disco Študent, where they met other supporters. This is the way Lublanski Psi came into existence: by some kids hanging at the same spots. Spontaneously, without having any instrumental skills. This is why Mario doesn't think very highly about his band at that time. But he did it because he wanted to sing. Because he liked the stage. If it was up to him, their music would be much more melodic. Like Sham 69 or the Sex Pistols, of course. But no matter what he thinks, Lublanski Psi did mean something for those three years of existence at the end of the '70s and beginning of '80s, and still does.

—Sabina Kraner

BESPOSLIČARI

Romeo Đomlija and his band the Spoons have played for a long time and are known for their '60s-style punk rock, both in Croatia and abroad. But perhaps not a lot of people outside of Pula know that Romeo was one of the people active within the punk rock scene there from the very start and one of the creators of the scene.

His bands Visoki Napon and Besposličari (Idlers) were well-known names back then. These bands both managed to leave studio tracks behind and some of the songs became local hits and later on spread the spirit of Pula, the small town that had a one-of-a-kind scene in the former Yugoslavia. Today it's finally possible to buy Besposličari's LP. In my opinion, it's a very good album that I believe will bring happiness to many with its simple but effective and unpolished pop punk sound. I asked Romeo, the guitarist from the band, to try to remember the period before and after Besposličari, the situation in the town, and everything else in between.

Interview and introduction by Habi.
Pictures from the NE! Records archive.

MRR: OK, can we go back to the beginning of your obsession with music? Pula was one of the few cities in ex-Yu that punk rock touched relatively early on, and you were one of the first to start playing. How did it actually start? Was it punk from the beginning? What did you listen to back then? What did your friends listen to?

You know, punk rock just appeared in a single day, believe it or not. I walked into a record shop that particular day, and there on one of the shelves stood the Clash's first album, Vibrators – *Pure Mania*, the first Real Kids record, Dr. Feelgood's *Stupidity*, and AC/DC – *High Voltage*. A whole lotta revolution in the head—everything that a kid like me needed. Yeah, you had bands like Dr. Feelgood under the label of punk. But we shouldn't forget that it was another time.

MRR: Is it at all possible to talk about a punk *scene* in Pula? Which bands played then? How hard was it to play in Pula?

The punk scene in Pula was like any other punk scene in ex-Yu: it consisted of only a few bands. The cities where punk existed in 1978 were Pula, Rijeka, Ljubljana, and Zagreb. In Pula you had Problemi, who performed for the first time in a sports hall, Mladost, which is a big venue. They only played three songs: "Problemi" (their own original song) and two covers of "God Save the Queen" and "TNT." It was a totally electrifying, really good performance. Six months later they cut the legendary demo with the original line-up.

Termiti and Paraf were also from Rijeka. Paraf played punk in the rock club Uljanik with Problemi, and I have to say that in my opinion, Problemi were much better (at least for that show). Pankrti came from the Slovenian capitol of Ljubljana and there was a lot of fuss about them, but I didn't find it to be anything particularly good—not bad either, they were just a band. I saw them also as an opening act for an Anti-Nowhere League concert in Ljubljana. All punks from Pula went to see that gig. It was a train ride away; cheap, almost like a pilgrimage. Prljavo Kazaliste was the main "punk" band from Zagreb whom I have never seen live and whom I consider to be posers. This band had a good first album, but later on they went mainstream, and that was the case with the entire scene in ex-Yu. It was that which killed the punk; their desire for money and fame.

Azra played in Uljanik during the time when they released their first album, and that was really something special, world class. During that time they were probably the best new wave, half-punk band in Yugoslavia. Somewhere around that time—after their first single but before the debut LP came out—I also met Branimir Štulić Johnny in Pula. I remember that we talked about the Beatles and instruments and stuff and he complained that Vox AC-30 isn't a good amp, as they recorded their first album with that and he couldn't get a

good sound. That was a totally false presumption as, well, it was not the amp, but the producer responsible for a bad mix.

In Istria, the majority of input and info was coming from Italy, not Zagreb (the capitol of Croatia). People watched Italian television and we bought records and instruments from Trieste. This is true for Rijeka as well. I bought my Sex Pistols LP in Trieste. Forget about Zagreb. They were self-absorbed and they still are. They live in their own world and only manipulate the rest of Croatia; fashionable people who only follow trends and are good at imposing their viewpoints. There was never much punk in Zagreb. The punk was in Rijeka, Pula, and Ljubljana.

I have to clarify for those who do not live in Europe that we're talking about small distances here. In Europe, there is often a situation in which you have some new border and new country every few hundred kilometers. For example, from Rijeka to Trieste it's 70 kilometers, from Pula to Trieste it's 100 kilometers, etc.

MRR: Was there any understanding in town of what you were doing? Any safe zone, so to speak? And what experiences did you have with the police, the school, on the streets?
There was no big tension with or real persecution from the police, like in countries behind the Iron Curtain, Czechoslovakia, Poland etc. The police were present of course, but it's always like that, you know—they are here to protect you...right? Yugoslavia was more liberal in some ways than some democracies today. We lived smooth lives, the standard was much better than today, it was a land of opportunities. Free school system, paid college; you know, a blue collar worker was able to send his kids to college, and the health care was free, and from today's perspective it looks almost like a land from fairy tales. But back then we couldn't see that. We felt suffocated. You know, it's always greener on the other side, shit like that, which was basically a propaganda...But you know what? There were at least 200 fans at the local gigs, at some small venue, on a shitty PA system, but we had our fun. Today, everything is so detached. You have the best sound system, lights, everything, but only thirty to fifty people standing ten metres from the stage, not participating, and on top of that, bands are not so good either.

MRR: Your first band, Visoki Napon, played with the bands Paraf and Termiti who later on became legendary. What are your memories from that time?
We were good, but that time was also good. It was for real. The bands up until the beginning of the '80s were real bands, it was a massive thing back then, rock. There was so much energy present in the concerts, to be a musician back then was the real thing. Later on, everything just became a Xerox copy of the real thing. The interest of the public suddenly swayed sometime in the mid '80s. Later it became even worse. Now almost no people go to concerts. During the period of 1979–80, everyone knew me as that guy from that band who did that at that concert, like a rock star. It was an unforgettable feeling. By the way, Paraf, Termiti, and Problemi were all five notches above everything that now exists in ex-Yu.

MRR: Visoki Napon recorded a demo with songs that had potential. Was there any effort by the band to use the demo to reach audiences outside of Pula? Why did the band stop playing?
We were at our prime time back then, but unfortunately all of us had military service to do, so the decision was to reunite the band when we came back...

MRR: Was Besposličari formed after Visoki Napon?
No, we had a band before Besposličari. We tried to play garage rock, English lyrics and all that, but the rest of the band was stuck in the traditional rock forms, whereas I wanted to play primitive garage rock, which is a completely

different world. I remember a particular scene from one of the rehearsals: I was playing my Velvet Underground album to a drummer—"Waiting For The Man" I think—naively asking him, "Ain't that beautiful?" His only response was "I hate this." That's why I created Besposličari soon afterwards with other people. I had enough of those super-smart types from 1983 to whom which punk rock suddenly no longer appealed. Then came the synth bands with big snare productions. And I wanted to do the exact opposite, so I created an old school punk band inspired by my favorite band, the Ramones. It was very brave back then, as the Ramones and similar punk bands were seen as the outcasts, things of the past. Please bear in mind that people were just following the trends. They always do. Now in Croatia, there is no shortage in attendance to some electro dance parties with DJs.

MRR: In 1984 you recorded a demo with enough material for a LP. I assume that you recorded it with that in mind. The songs are of good quality and well played. Why wasn't an LP released and why did you wait for such a long time?
We were not able to release the album, as there were no independent labels back then. But we made the demo to preserve the songs, and later on in 1985 we went to a professional studio, which resulted in few more songs that we included on the LP. At the same time, there were some other bands in Pula who did demos too, some of which you've released as well. But we are talking the second wave of punk, whereas I belong to the first wave, which is a big difference. Five years is a long time and a lot of things happened during that time, so the '80s scene never really meant much to me. The punk from the '70s was a global thing, whereas in the '80s, punk went from Minor Threat to established arena rock, and that's why many of the bands didn't last long.

MRR: Under which conditions did you record your demo?
The problem was that you couldn't do shit if you didn't belong to the mainstream category. That's why you have a scenario in which some new wave bands from Zagreb were changing their style so quickly, only to become completely commercial in the mid '80s. There were no independent labels until Listen Loudest was created by Zdenko Franjić.

MRR: Visoki Napon, Besposličari, and the Spoons are bands with different musical concepts, is that the result of a conscious decision to experiment?
I was always influenced by the same music as the guys from the early UK punk scene, like '60s garage rock, the Kinks, the Beatles, the Who, Velvet Underground. I am only four or five years younger than those people from that first punk wave (the Jam, the Sex Pistols, Buzzcocks), so I'm sure that we share the same musical influences.

MRR: Is music still your number one priority? Any plans for the future?
Well, I've been involved with music from 1976 and that is still somehow my main priority. When it comes to my old band the Spoons, I do not have any intention nor plans to work with them again. That's something I've left behind me in the last century.

The Spoons were a classic garage punk band based loosely on the Sonics, Lyres, Cynics, and that famous Crypt compilation *Back From the Grave*. Today, Black Lips and some other bands like Ty Segall are doing similar stuff. And back then, at the end of the '80s, I held the opinion that the Spoons were merely a solid band, perhaps a bit above the average. But we were a band on our way up, then suddenly everything disappeared overnight (or a day) when Yugoslavia broke up. It was just like in the movies; you know, those catastrophe movies with thousands of cars blocked in the middle of the roads, people asking each other what's going on, restlessness in the air.

On that day we were heading to Ljubljana, our first album had just been released and we were doing a promotional gig in the capital of Slovenia, but everything collapsed in a matter of seconds, as if someone turned off the lights and we went straight to darkness, into a twilight zone. Later on there were good concerts, especially with the band Dead Moon whom we befriended. We played a lot with them, mainly in Slovenia, but the best concert was in Tubingen, which is a small town near Stuttgart.

My new project/band is something that builds on what I did at the end of the '70s, something connected to the music of the Velvet Underground, the Ramones, Wipers, Wire (the *Pink Flag* album), and similar bands. Today there is a sort of punk hipster scene around that I'm following and it's pretty much exclusively about bands from America. I have adopted the DIY etiquette, which Fred Cole and Dead Moon taught me.

MRR: What are your memories and thoughts about ex-Yugoslavia?
You know, with the breakup of Yugoslavia, bands from the ex-republics weren't able to play in different parts other than their own. For example, Partibrejkers from Serbia, with great effort and under great risk, managed to play a couple of gigs in Croatia in the early '90s. The Slovenians saved the situation, as anyone could go there and play, no matter which nationality. If Slovenia didn't exist, nothing would've been able to survive. We released a couple of albums in Slovenia and we have many friends there.

The sales dropped considerably. During that time in Yugoslavia, it was normal that bands sold about 40,000 LPs, or bestsellers went even up to 250,000 or 600,000, but now the number is merely 500 copies. Talking about the scene, it disappeared somewhere in the mid to late '90s. Bands played their old songs, which the audiences knew, indefinitely. People moved abroad, one generation disappeared and nothing important or new appeared. The problem that rock had in Yugoslavia, and in Europe in general, was that it always followed the trends and directions from England. The goal was always to be as good as some other band, but in doing that they forgot to be original.

And when it comes to the British scene, their biggest problem is that their old bands are much better than the later ones. Back then, in Yugoslavia we didn't have the internet, and information was passed around from magazines such as *NME*. But they've always focused on the British scene. While today, you can easily find out which bands are playing in some small club in an American city. You can follow such a band if you like and download an MP3, buy a vinyl if you have the money for that, and when a new local band appears in your own town, it's very logical that you compare it to what you've seen on the internet. I don't need any journalist to tell me what's good or what isn't.

The self-titled Besposličari LP will finally see the light of day. Coming soon thanks to NE!

BULDOŽER

Buldožer is the most influential Slovenian band from the mid '70s and have a special place within the history of Yugoslavian punk rock. They were the first band to bring something fun and playful to the otherwise indifferent scene. It later proved to be very successful and, above all, very noble. Buldožer were alone with their humorous avant-garde approach to music and got a lot of media attention, but it did not result in the band becoming commercialized, though they were not without success. And despite their success, Buldožer always managed to keep the avant-garde element which made them special.

Buldožer's debut album, Spit the Truth In the Eye, *was very important for the punk scene in Yugo, successfully shaking the rock'n'roll standards and causing long lasting effects on the scene. This puts them on an innovative pedestal that only a few deserve a spot on. Buldožer are often seen as the predecessors of Yugo punk and New Wave. It is not surprising that other bands refer to them as their role models and an important band, as they were the only link in Yugo to punk and the freedom and authenticity it represents. Buldožer were often seen with these new bands, making fun with them.*

What is especially appealing about this band is that they are not only brilliant musicians, but also wonderful people who will make you laugh and make sure that you keep your feet firmly on the ground. They are the most consequential rock'n'roll band that repeatedly gives us something extra. Their discography offers some of the best Yugo rock music, but their lack of elitism and plenitude of self-awareness is expressed by the band themselves in this ironic statement: Fuck Buldožer!

Intro and interview with Igor Bašin (AKA BIGor) by Habi. Pictures from the NE! Records archive.

MRR: A conversation about the relationship between Buldožer and punk should probably start with Pankrti's first concert at Moste grammar school in Ljubljana in October 1977.

A bit earlier, actually. I was lucky; my neighbour had Sex Pistols – *Never Mind the Bollocks*, soon after it was released. When we accidentally met, he told me that he had some weird record where they're only thrashin', and that since he doesn't like it, he could give it to me if I was interested. Of course I was interested. I liked it tremendously. I showed it to the other Buldožer members and we listened to it together. Even before the first Pankrti concert, we played some Ramones song, but I can't remember which one, ha.

Then the Pankrti concert happened. At that time, I was close friends with Pankrti singer Pero's sister. She mentioned him a lot and then introduced us, too. I remembered his face from a John Mayal concert in Ljubljana in 1975, where he went pretty wild in the first row and then Mayall jumped from the stage and went wild with him. I enjoyed the Pankrti concert. It was something completely new, lots of energy, good image, a great deal of provocation. Personally I didn't see it as shocking, as many others did. It was obvious that they have something to say. They were convincing.

There were all kinds of people at the concert. From younger ones with punk looks to long-haired, bearded hippies. Obviously, something started to happen again. After the concert, I talked to Igor Vidmar about it for an hour or two in the middle of the street. I thought it was excellent, but he was wavering. But, after two weeks, he lent me a bunch of punk singles that he had purchased in that time.

I discovered punk very early and it suited me because of the harder sound. British bands were closer to me than American. They had a stronger drive. I found the Sex Pistols fantastic. I was fascinated because they played so well. Buldožer's relation to punk was very early, with songs "Slovinjak Punk," "Higijena," and "Novo Vrijeme." On a Vojvodina tour in 1977, we talked how we were doing punk even before we really knew about it or before it became renowned.

MRR: Where was the contact point between Buldožer and punk?

Probably in this raw approach, although twelve-to-fifteen-minute-long songs are not exactly the most representative of punk, ha. We also expressed rebellion through music, not only through lyrics. But it all perfectly blended together.

MRR: Did you, seeing the problems which punk in Yugoslavia came across, think that you would have to struggle with similar problems?

We didn't think about such connections. When punk became official, after the first Pankrti and some other bands' records, we made jokes on that account. We made fun of everything anyway. Also ourselves. I remember we were announcing that what we play is a totally offensive negation of classical [music]. This punk classification of ours was later used by Croatian rock critic Darko Glavan in a book about punk which was published in 1980. Sometimes things happen that are not necessarily a consequence of some trend. When I heard punk, I found it purely normal, a natural thing that was suppose to happen.

MRR: Then there is nothing strange about the fact you got carried away behind a Hammond organ, at a Pankrti Beograd concert in November of 1977, where Buldožer also played.

It wasn't strange at all. Those were the days of Slovenian youth culture in SKC. Their concert started with Pero's provocations. In front of the stage were refined students who were confused at his performance: "What is this guy doing?! What is this guy saying?!" And then they started to trash their instruments. By the third or fourth song, I was just—I still don't know how—swept on the stage, where my Hammond stood. I spontaneously started to play with them. Members of Pankrti just looked at me: "Wow! Great!" About a year ago, Pero mentioned to me that he found a recording of this concert!

Our collaboration began with this show in Belgrade. I performed with Pankrti on two tours. And Pero appeared as a Buldožer guest at 1979's Lublana Je Zaspana Concert in Hala Tivoli and sang "Slovinjak Punk." I collaborated also on recording their first record, *Dolgcajt*. I played piano and Hammond and was also co-producer. I helped with my experiences, I gave some songs a different sound. For example, when recording "Zelenye Berega Peysažov/Ljubica," we had put the microphone on an

acoustic piano and we led sound through a Leslie. That's why this was quite a unique sound, at least for the Slovenian scene at that time. I wanted to add more drive than they did with guitars and I think I contributed to the extra energy.

MRR: Were your songs "Higijena," "Slovinjak Punk," and "Novo Vrijeme" spurred by punk, which exploded at that time in Yugoslavia?
We always thought of ourselves as Buldožer. We knew we were not similar to others on the scene. When we started in 1975, punk didn't even exist yet. When it occurred and when words like "punk" and "New Wave" started to define a new era, we reacted with a bit of fooling around. Like in "Slovinjak Punk," where an old man comes home and starts to smash things up and when he gets to his son, the son tells him "Dad, you're punk!" We fooled around. We never felt like a punk or New Wave band. I regularly visited concerts of 92, Berlinski Zid, etc. Very early, I was at Otroci Socializma rehearsal. I performed a lot with Pankrti. I also have to mention Preporod from Maribor. We met on stage and partied. I can say for myself that I was in the punk scene. The rest of the band, not so much. By all means, though, this scene was closer to us than Bijelo Dugme and such Yugoslavian rock bands of that time. I was very good friends with Termiti from Rijeka, especially with late Tica. I hung out a lot with Vojko Flegar, who made a lot of Buldožer photos then. In February 1980, we went together to a Ramones concert in Udine, Italy, where the UK Subs were supporting. We were bonded by energy.

MRR: You mentioned Termiti. In the time of editing of the 1979 film *Živi bili pa vidjeli*, for which you contributed music, you appeared on a show at TV Zagreb where you introduced the song "Novo Vrijeme." During the show, Marko Brecelj tore up a pillow and scattered feathers all around the studio. Something similar was done by Termiti in November 1979 at a legendary concert in the Kristalna Dvorana at Hotel Kvarner in Opatija. Who was first? Buldožer or Termiti?
I have no idea. I didn't even know they did this, although I was at couple of their concerts. I'm sure that Brecelj and Bele didn't see Termiti with that pillow. And I don't believe they saw us with it. I would say that this was entirely spontaneous reaction, because if you tear feathers, this is boom—freedom! Let everything go into the air, to hell, ha-ha!

MRR: There is a lot of your influence felt on the first Paraf record, as well. Especially in the lyrics.
We played a lot in Rijeka. I assume these boys listened a lot to us. We performed in Rijeka with a group called September, who were quite different from us. In 1977, we played there with Dr. Feelgood. Later I met these people from the punk scene and felt tremendous respect towards them. They mentioned us in interviews and statements as well. In the movie *Sretno Dijete Jajo* from Prljavo Kazalište, it says that they listened to Buldožer. I hung out with them and was present at the recording of their first single, "Moj Otac Je Bio U Ratu," at Jadran film.

MRR: In 1979, the concert "Lubljana Je Zaspana" (Ljubljana is sleepy) happened in Ljubljana, which is regarded as a confirmation of punk and New Wave existing. You performed with Pankrti.
Me and Boris Bele organized this concert in collaboration with Radio Študent and Pankrti, who already had a single out, "Lublana Je Bulana." Something bad happened to Buldožer at that time, though. Brecelj left us. We were aware that our first concert without Brecelj would divide the audience. So we decided that at our first concert without Brecelj, "this Brecelj" won't be important at all. Because we were already known as forerunners of the punk and New Wave scene, we invited all those different bands. We invited Na Lepem Prijazni, because me and Bele figured that if they perform, we could get on stage almost all the old crew of Sedem Svetlobnih Let, the band before Buldožer. Dušan Žiberna was in Pankrti, Andrej Trobentar in Na Lepem Prijazni, and the three of us—Bele, Veble, and me—in Buldožer. In the end we also performed one or two songs as Sedem Svetlobnih Let. We invited Prljavo Kazalište because at that time they still were

really punk and because I hung a lot in Zagreb with Bogović and Jajo. I suggested Jani Kovačič, whom I knew from university where I studied musicology. Every time we took the elevator to class, he grunted his songs. I suggested him to Boris as a punk singer songwriter, as something completely new. The name for the concert alone came from "Lublana je Bulana," but we didn't directly follow this name. Instead we used *zaspana*, because Ljubljana was really *zaspana* (sleepy) at that time. After the concert, we met *Melody Maker* journalist Chris Bohn, who was in Ljubljana and wrote about the concert. He did an interview with us. A bit later, a month or two, we organized the same concert in Zagreb titled "Slovinjak Rock." Brecelj and Feo performed there as well, as the duo Zlatni Zub. We had the guts to have Brecelj on stage there, as a non-Buldožer member, if I can make a little joke, ha. This was quite a painless baptism of Buldožer without Brecelj.

MRR: "Lublana Je Zaspana" was the last concert where bands of different styles were put on stage. The dogma of orthodox punk established itself in the Ljubljana scene shortly after that…
Exactly! Because I was in the army in 1980, I missed one year. When I returned, things changed a lot, as you said. Orthodoxy prevailed. Critics like Marjan Ogrinc and Peter Barbarič already gave bad reviews of our concert in 1980. Not long before this, Marjan Ogrinc hung out on student campus where we had our rehearsal space. Radio Študent was in the building next door. He was a fan of Buldožer. Then, total turnaround happened. Peter Barbarič also gave a very bad review of some other concert. I discussed it with him and he told me that personally he liked the concert, but Peter Barbarič as a critic had something completely different in his head. Funny. Yes, the scene began to close down.

MRR: A similar reception happened to Pankrti with their second record, *Državni Ljubimci*. You kept a connection to the scene through your studio. When did you start to record bands there?
In 1983, Quod Massacre and Niet came to me. I remember how, while recording Niet, Igor Dernovšek and Aleš Črešnovar talked behind me about old farts and about Pankrti as commercial. I have to say that these boys were really young and came with some unique charge. They were charged with their own criticism. I was a good friend of Gregor—Gigi from UBR. We never cooperated, but we hung out a lot. And he introduced me to the hardcore scene. He told me about a strongly coherent scene. That they have their own fanzine, correspond with people all over the world and exchange fanzines, what was like a predecessor of the internet today. He told me about a multitude of bands all over the world, in Europe and also in Yugoslavia. He introduced me somehow to all these bands. Suddenly I was recording only this scene: Dva Minuta Mržnje and Solunski Front from Belgrade, Proces from Subotica, Quod Massacre, Niet, III. Kategorija and O! Kult from Ljubljana, Ženevski Dekret from Mostar, Trobecove Krušne Peči from Zagreb, SOR. from Idrija, Gottschee and K Sound XXX from Kočevje, the Polish band Abaddon from Gdansk. I really did these hardcore bands with my heart and I befriended all of them. It was a very positive period. Niet came back to me after years when they reunited and Quod Massacre recorded some songs at my studio after almost twenty years. In the '80s I also recorded Lublanski Psi and the band Gloria with singer Norina Radovan (a renowned opera singer today), and many other punk bands.

MRR: It's fascinating how Buldožer members stay connected with younger folks. Marko Brecelj with his activity in Koper and in the club scene, you record young and old.
I just finished recording Prismojeni Profesorji Bluesa, members of which are the same age as my daughters.

MRR: Where does this bond come from? Originality?
I think so. Running a studio is serious business, but I always worked according to a system that it's not only business but pleasure as well. If I want pleasure, I have to work with bands that are close to me. I always liked to work with young bands because they are unspoiled, like children. They still have sincerity and rudimentality [sic] in them. After the third or fourth record, bands became very calculating and you have to make…ehm…compromises with them, ha ha! Also, these kids said they feel like we are the same generation, ha ha! But I'm only a year or two older than their dads and mums. Probably Marko feels something similar. By all means everything is very natural and spontaneous. I can say for myself that I never made a step from childhood into adulthood. I enjoy being a child. I like to make fun at home; who's the most nuts in the family—and it's still me, ha! I like it, this is the way I am.

***

NIET

Slovenian punk group Niet was founded in late 1983 and quickly became established as one of the best bands of the then very strong Ljubljana hardcore scene. The band was soon to carve a unique path for itself, recording first the hit "Depresija" (Depression) in April 1984, followed by two summer blockbusters, "Pesrpektive" (Perspectives) and "Ritem človeštva" (Rhythm of humanity). In 2008, after it seemed that Niet would never grace the stage again, the group (under constant pressure from the public) returned with new singer Borut Marolt (ex-Prisluhnimo Tišini / Listen To The Silence) and a near-perfect original lineup in guitarists Igor Dernovšek and Robert Likar, bassist Aleš Češnovar, and drummer Thomas Bergant. In the summer of 2015, Kemptation *writer Andrejka Zupancic interviewed guitarist and original founding member Igor Dernovšek. Pictures from* MRR *Archives.*

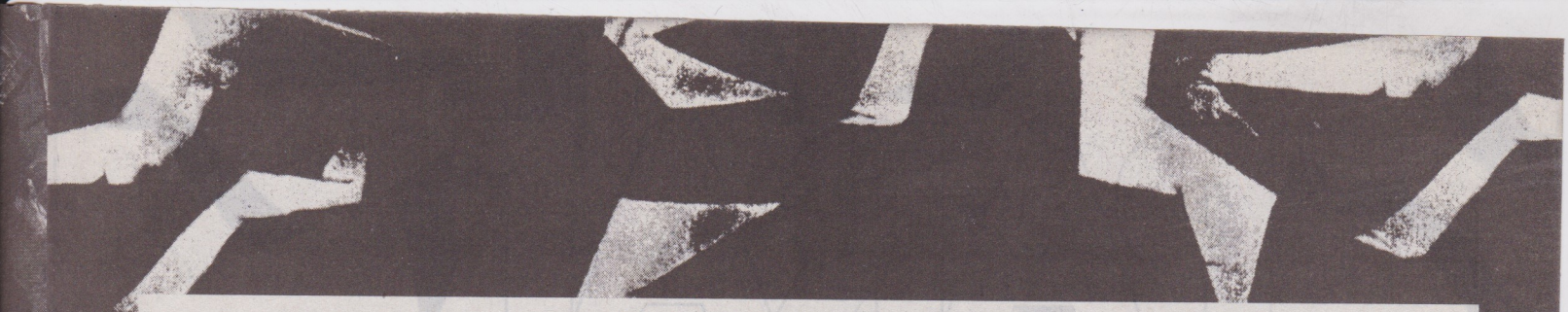
MRR: How did you decide to reform Niet after so many years?
Yes, it had been a long time. We were active (with a two year interruption due to the then mandatory military service in former Yugoslavia) from the end of 1983 to 1988. After the death of singer Primož Habič (1991), we gathered again in 1993 for a few concerts, but then we disbanded for fifteen years. In the meantime, our popularity grew so much that we were practically forced to return. Luckily, we found enough will and an excellent new frontman in Borut Marolt.

MRR: What kind of audience comes to your concerts? Is it mostly people from your early years or a younger generation?
Upon our return in 2008, we were somehow distributed between the old and young fans. Now our audience is dominated by youth, between 15 and 25 years old. We are a band that has equal effect on all generations and this is one of the things of which we are most proud.

MRR: Your singer Borut Marolt is formidable in carrying out his mission. How did the audience react to this addition? Were there any negative criticisms? It's clear that many people consider the singer to carry the appearance of the whole group.
He was accepted remarkably quickly. He himself, as well as the rest of us, were of course a little nervous at the beginning because Primoz Habič was kind of iconic in the punk scene of the '80s. I still remember the reactions in 1993 when I replaced him. But time apparently heals, while also exaggerating nostalgia.

MRR: What are your earliest memories of Niet's first years in the punk era? Do you have an interesting story from concerts during that period?
Naturally, we were very young at that time: seventeen, eighteen years old. We were angry kids, we were creating a lot of nonsense. Not all of [the stories] are for the public. It is also the fact that we were then a part of Yugoslavia and we had a "market" of 20 million. There were a lot more opportunities for concerts, several of which we played abroad in France, Italy, and elsewhere. We were also lucky to be able to play with some of the giants of the English and American punk scenes at that time, bands such as Angelic Upstarts and Youth Brigade, as well as with the biggest names of the former-Yugoslavian rock scene, such as EKV, Zabranjeno Pušenje, and Električni Orgazam.

MRR: Could you tell us briefly what the biggest difference in style is between your early years and now?
I do not know exactly. In the '80s, we were rapidly developing and



changing from the initial hardcore sound, some of which we still play at concerts. In recent months, we have already come up with a unique, shall we say, Niet style with a distinctive guitar sound, catchy tunes, and shadowy texts. As time wore on, we endeavored to expand our repertoire while keeping the same base.

MRR: How would you define yourselves in terms of conventional "commercial success," now or in the past?
Once we played for packs of beer and for travel costs on the train. Today, however, we can hire a van and actually get paid. Although we are among the most successful and desirable rock bands in Slovenia, it is far from plausible to speak of any commercial success. Slovenia is small, its population size that of a large European city, and the country's music scene is dominated by techno and folk. The most important things for us are that audiences respond at concerts and that we are putting out well-made LPs.

MRR: I have always been interested in your lives. Is it possible to live in Slovenia and make money only from music?
Our drummer, Bergant, is married and has two children, while Likar, our guitarist, is separated, has two children and a new girlfriend. The two other members of Niet are single and enjoy life. I live with my girlfriend and have a ten year old daughter. We are all employed, as railway conductor, postman, journalist, teacher, and stage worker. We are all trying to live as fully as possible; we like to drink and smoke a bit, but above all we love music. In Slovenia, with fewer than two million people, earning money with music can only be possible for a few folk bands. Some of the best session musicians, and some classical musicians employed in state institutions, can live from music alone.

MRR: Are you still as rebellious as you once were?
Much more so. Back then, we were more ferocious but we did not exactly know what we were resisting. Now the social situation is such that you have to be a rebel.

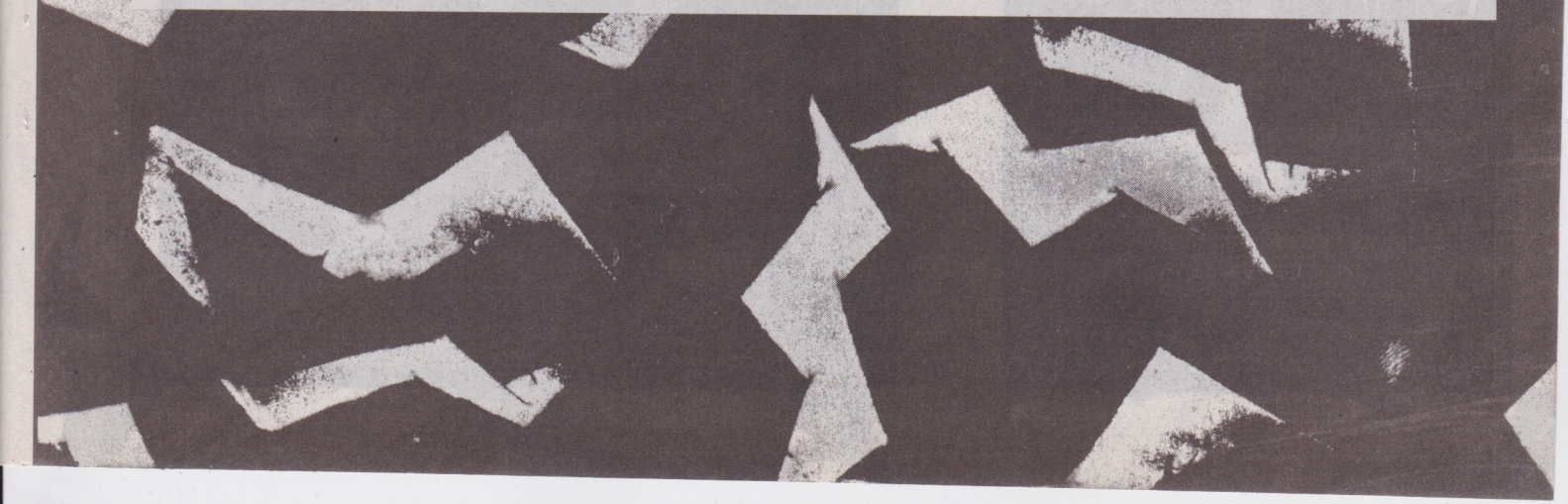
MRR: In one interview you said that "The trough has changed, the pigs remain the same." Who particularly are you targeting with this statement?
That in power there are always "rotten" people. This may be the inner circle of the former Communist Party or the present "left" and "right" wing politicians and their capitalist masters. In the end, it's the common people who always suffer.

MRR: Did you ever see Laibach as your competition? What do you think of them?
Laibach had formed a few years before us. Their music was in other waters and so while we did not really socialize together, we also did not compete. I appreciate them a lot: Laibach created a completely different form of expression and dared to provoke the then still very orthodox communist regime while making a huge breakthrough into the rest of the world. Respect to them!

MRR: Have you ever been politically engaged?
In the '80s, no. We were teenagers; politics did not interest us—not even a little bit. Now, politics is of great interest to us and this is reflected in some lyrics, even though our songs continue to be dominated by personally expressive poetry. To some extent, politics is my professional area since I earn money as a journalist.

MRR: How would you describe your musical style?
As Niet, I do not know. It's hard to say. [The music industry] classified us as punk, though we are not that. The energy of our music is punk-ish, but there are some obvious melodic influences and 1960s psychedelia, plus some other forms of rock and alternative music.

MRR: Plans for the future? Perhaps a tour abroad?
We recently released a reprint of our first cassette from 1984, *Srečna Mladina (Lucky Youth)* on NE! Records. It was one of the most re-recorded cassettes from Slovenia in history, or so people say. Most of the reprint copies went to the US, Germany, and Japan. By the time you read this, our new album, *V Bližini Ljudi (Near People)*, will be already released, and perhaps a tour of Slovenia will follow, but some concerts abroad might be possible, too.



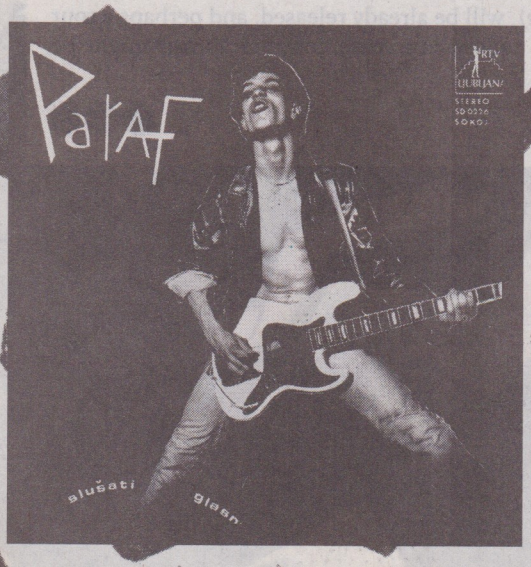
PARAF

Valter Kocijančić: singer, guitarist, author, and frontman of Paraf from Rijeka, one of the most interesting punk groups outside the English-speaking world of its time. As a journalist in various media, I followed Paraf from their first concerts to the musical activities of Valter Kocijančić today. Decades fly by, but Valter is still energetic, ironic, and witty.

Interview and introduction by Koraljko Pasarić. Photos from the NE! Records archive.

MRR: Recall the origins of the punk trio Paraf. Known as a live band, did you have more gigs than rehearsals?
Well, for us every gig was also a kind of rehearsal. And we played at various locations, wherever they called us. We were just satisfied that we could screw around and play as much as possible. We did not think about anything else. Nor that we were stars or something similar. We played all over ex-Yugoslavia, but mostly in Slovenia. The first real gig in a hall with a sound system was in Rijeka at Italiano di Cultura, the Italian community centre. There were other bands: rock, jazz-rock...And we were just "sick," beardless young boys. Something completely new. Unseen. And a lot of people were surprised. Many spit on us, others praised us highly...which is normal. But I didn't give a fuck about all that. Everyone should listen to what they like. Who can force me to listen to something that I do not like? At this first appearance, we performed some five or six songs, maybe about ten minutes in all. But fiercely. Those first performances were also great shocks for us. Because we were only kids, about fifteen to sixteen years old. This was the most important thing in the world. To overcome our jitters, we got plastered. And what little brain I had in my head was in a coma. For us it was all one big party. In the beginning we played in front of a mixed rock crowd, and there was only a handful who supported us...twenty young punks...But they followed us everywhere.

MRR: Rehearsals?
We only had one microphone plugged into a guitar amp and that was all. Like cavemen. Now the kids normally have their own sound systems for rehearsals. They have whatever they need. And we were happy to hear at least something. I screamed, sang real loud to be at least somewhat louder than the noise around me. In the very beginning, even before we became Paraf, we were a quartet called Unikat (Unique). In addition to the three of us—Zdrave, Pjer and me—was Franjo



on keyboards. We were in eighth grade. We went to the school principal and wanted to do a show for the pupils. The director agreed, and gave us a hall and a sound system with two microphones. We played chart hits and the audience was satisfied. In the midst of playing I had a real shock. Struck by electricity, I ended up in the audience. I just felt a blue light in my head.

MRR: Maybe this moment determined your future musical journey?
Who knows? It burnt out what little brain I had. I got up—we did not stop the music. Only afterward, I sang half a meter away from the microphone.

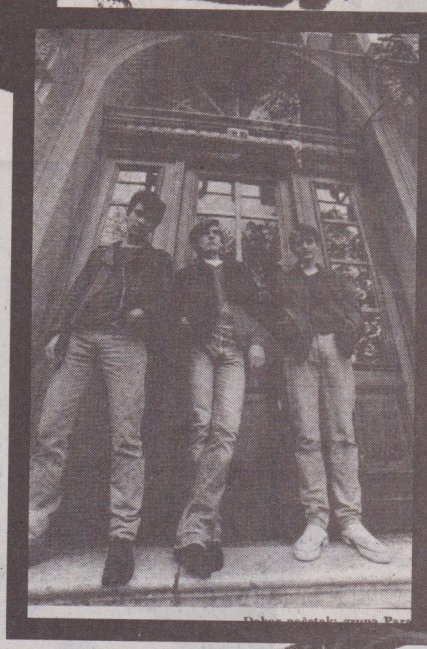
MRR: Let's go to the live songs on this edition!
The song "Otok Goli" (Barren Island) was created by Zdrave when he saw a tattooed character with one verse on his skin: "The sun is shining, rock is burning; oh my mother, it's the Barren island." And I followed up on it immediately and sang the rest. We constantly had that song in our repertoire. The live tape is from a concert session in Pula. A lot of people didn't know what it was about. And many kids today also do not know what it's all about: a deadly penitentiary island for mostly political prisoners.

MRR: Or worse yet, they just do not care.
Yeah, that's worse. They just don't give a fuck. The song "Obijest" (Arrogance) is one of our first songs. I wrote the lyrics and melody and I can say that when I hear it today it is one of the most mature songs I wrote. But unfortunately we played it very rarely, especially when our first LP came out. "Grad" (City) is a song that Zdrave wrote. I really like his bass notes. The song was created later and has a positive, happy feeling. I am somewhat of a specific figure. Some will not understand, but I feel that the most important thing is music... and the lyrics are second to it. If I like the melody then everything is OK. The rhythm takes me. If I want to read the lyrics, I will read a book. My crazy theory is: music is the most important.

MRR: Is the song "Crkve" (Churches) also called "Confirmation – Berma"?
"Confirmation – Berma keeps the soul; because it can misbehave..."
But officially it was "Churches." A song we always called "Policija" (Police) was officially named "Narodna Pjesma" (The People's Song).

MRR: I have to admit that these unofficial titles were better, more direct, and often more effective than those "official" ones.
You have to know the context of the time. In Yugoslavia, it was not the police but the militia. People's militia. So cynically we named the song "The People's Song."

MRR: What about the song "Visoki Propisi" (Strict Regulations)?
I always first make the music...Humming the melody...Singing. At that time there was fierce censorship, so we had to be very



careful. We changed the words, meanings. Many did not understand. Lucky for us. Especially for the first LP, we had to be very careful with the verses. The song "Barren Island" had to be the original or nothing. So we did not record it. If we did, the LP would be banned and we would end up in jail. There was no doubt. When we came to Ljubljana to record our first album, the editor of the publishing house told us "Guys, change the lyrics, I'm not going to jail because of you." And then we changed what we could. We were lucky to have been invited to record the album.

MRR: And however bitter it tastes, to say it even today, but it's true: I'm glad you agreed to a partial compromise. The LP was eventually released and remained a special kind of audio document of its time.
The album was taxed as trash, as less valuable. More expensive and less accessible. But whoever wanted it bought it regardless of the higher price. Morons tried their best, but they didn't succeed. There are morons today too, only in a different disguise.

MRR: Live performances and recordings of live performances were a world in themselves. A lot of things could be said live than in the official studio recordings for legal publications, right?
Yes. But a lot of songs from the first period—and even from the first album—were never played many times: "T Like a Cow," "Pritanga and Vase...," even "Churches" was rarely performed.

MRR: How do you see them today, these live recordings? What's your feeling? Are they funny, amusing...?
They were once funnier. Now they all seem different. They are something special. For some stupid, for others smart. They are what they are. I cannot say I'm terribly proud of all that, but I'm very glad we did it.

MRR: Perhaps there is a bit of healthy nostalgia, but without pathos. Just the sound of part of a generation and its era.
When I hear these live recordings, I relive some special scenes in my head like a movie.

MRR: In the fog?
Yes, partly in the fog. Sometimes there is not even a fog. A lot has happened in a very short time. And it's five movies simultaneously. Rushing from day to day, from gig to gig. Recordings of live performances were done with audiocassette recorders. Possibly one channel from the mixer to sound more powerful in mono and that's it.

MRR: After many decades you are musically active again.
I teach in school and still it is a great pleasure to work with kids. They are a very special world. And with the group Mandrill things are incredibly tight, no matter that we are from a completely different generation. We have a good album, but our greatest pleasure is playing live music. We have the same rock feel which sometimes reminds me of those early years. When we're together on stage, nothing else matters.

Taken from the upcoming release
Blazing Through The Fog,
out soon on NE! Records.

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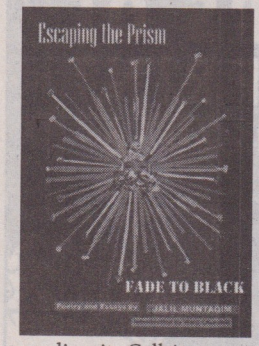


Escaping the Prism; Fade to Black
Jalil Muntaqim
Kersplebedeb Publishing and Distribution
$20 | 316 pages

Jalil Muntaqim is a former Black Panther and political prisoner currently serving time at the infamous Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York. I've gotten the chance to write to and visit him over the past few years, and while I was excited that he released a new book, I was worried that I wouldn't enjoy reading it. Call it my punk sensibilities, but I've never been much of a poetry person. I often find it overly dry or overly romantic. I was surprised then when I found myself lying in bed captivated and experiencing visceral responses to his wordsmithy expressions of that which goes on within and around a man incarcerated for more than 44 years.

I practically squirmed reading "A Long Kiss Goodnight," which takes you on a brief romantic and sexy journey into an oft-longed-for intimate moment. My stomach turned into knots reading "Talking to Depression," which poetically delves into confronting the complexity of having a loved one who is slipping away from sanity, a feeling too many of us resonate with even outside the dehumanizing context of prison. The poetry encompasses so many aspects of life, which can allow the reader to have a glimpse into Jalil's multi-faceted personhood. That ultimately humanizes him, despite the prison's effort to do otherwise. There were also moments where I finished a poem feeling that awkward combination of anger and mourning at a tragic world, while simultaneously having a resolve and renewed inspiration to continue the fight for a better one.

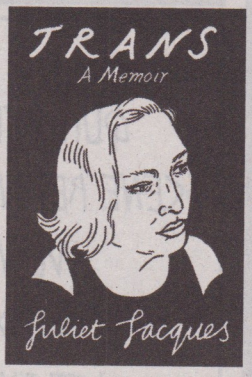
I get the feeling that Jalil is taking a crack at more modern hip-hop rhythms in the poem "New Afrikan Anthem of a Ruph Ryder." It has a little bit of friendly backlash against some common themes in mainstream hip-hop, with rhymes against sexist lyrics and attitudes and mild critiques of gangster culture. But the main point of the poem is a positive vision. He is painting a picture of a New Afrikan nation, a place where Black people have power and agency in their lives, treat each other with respect, share work and resources, and create a just society. He does this with at times crude and blunt rhymes, always going back to the refrain "this is how it's going to be!"

The essays give context to it all, giving a more concrete insight into Jalil's life, politics, and imprisonment. The topics are diverse, but generally political in nature. My favorite is called "Hands Up—Don't Shoot," named after a common chant amongst protesters responding the murder of Mike Brown by police in Ferguson. The essay is somewhat of a cross between critique and call to action. He begins right off the bat expressing disdain at the early slogan when he says, "…we know that keeping your hands up does not mean you will not be shot." He goes on to explain the inherent racial power inequity in the system and the need for more than simply a plea for mercy. I appreciated how he also uses this opportunity to relate the current Black Lives Matter movement to his own history with the Black Panther Party. This inspired me to see myself and others as part of living history. I hope that sense of past and future can inspire readers to play a part in dismantling racist systems and changing the world for the better.

Ward Churchill is a guest essayist in *Escaping the Prism*, finishing off the book with "The Other Kind." He gives the reader a very detailed and vivid picture of the political context of the time period between approximately 1968 and 1972 in the US, which he uses to make the case for amnesty not just for Jalil, but for other political prisoners still being held from back then. I appreciated his attention to accuracy and minutia. That said, I found this essay to be a little too academic to keep my attention. I wonder if maybe this type of complex language is what scares away some people from anything that smells political. I think the essay is a valuable part of the book, but I could have done with a little more layperson's talk and a little less jargon.

As a friend once said, "Ninety percent of all genres suck." If that's true, then as far as poetry goes, I'll say I think a lot of *Escaping the Prism* makes it into the non-sucky ten percent. Jalil's book does something rare. He takes his life experience and radical political views and turns them into small but packed pieces, which when given attention can allow the reader to experience and feel some part of him in a more full way. And despite the borders between us, *Escaping the Prism* conveys concepts and feelings that I think many of us can relate to regardless of gender, race, age, or what side of the prison walls we find ourselves on.

—Mars Goetia



Trans: A Memoir
Juliet Jacques
Verso Press
$20.95 | 320 pgs

The past few years have seen an explosion in mainstream discussions of trans issues, both in politics and pop culture. Caitlyn Jenner, Janet Mock, and Laverne Cox are now household names, and everyone (including my transphobic relatives, unfortunately) suddenly wants to voice their opinions about transgender identity. In this intense climate, Juliet Jacques gives us *Trans: A Memoir*, a book that serves to self-consciously unravel trans narrative conventions and dismantle so-called radical feminist thinking.

Juliet Jacques used to write a column for *The Guardian* called "Transgender Journey," and her book expands on much of that same material. However, it doesn't feel like a "journey" so much as a snapshot, and although being trans is undeniably something that shaped Juliet and affects her life, this really wasn't just a book about being a trans woman either. The story is mostly about the life of a depressed post-punk, arthouse film nerd, and football lover living in Brighton turned broke writer struggling to make it in London, with trans identity making up a single piece of her life (albeit one that understandably takes up a lot of time and brainspace).

The story picks up with Juliet at college in Manchester, geeking out over Factory Records history, listening to the Smiths, writing obscure film reviews, and cross-dressing but not yet identifying as trans. With the support of her friends and some help from the internet, she eventually starts going by Juliet and wearing women's clothing in public. She decides to begin the long, arduous path to get hormones and eventually get sexual reassignment surgery (SRS), a process that takes around three years in

Britain. Around the same time, she realizes that although Brighton (known for being one of the most LGBT friendly cities in Britain) is the safest place for her to be, it is not the best career-wise. She moves in with her friend Helen in London and begins a completely new life. Her column at *The Guardian* becomes immensely popular and she soon finds herself their go-to person on trans issues. Treated like a token, she's invited to dinners in the inner circle of British news media and starts to ponder the ethics of her newfound soapbox.

When she tries to branch out and pitch articles about anything besides being trans, no one is interested. So she decides to use the column to counter the offensive ways mainstream media (including *The Guardian*) portray trans people. In many ways, Juliet's experiences are an example of a best-case scenario, very atypical for many of the trans and genderqueer people I know. Almost everyone she encounters is accepting of her transition and incredibly supportive. Her friends, in particular the cis women, all seem like wonderful people—buying her stuffed animals to get through surgery, taking her shopping, and immediately saying yes, you belong here. Her parents are initially confused but eventually come around and take care of her after her SRS. She's also able to get inexpensive therapy and surgery covered by the NHS, and recover on a small salary of government benefits, with no major health complications. Although Juliet never presumes to speak for everyone, I do worry that some people will read *Trans* and think of it as a reflection of the lives of all trans women, instead of just the story of one (middle class, white) woman, in a world where trans women of color get murdered all the time.

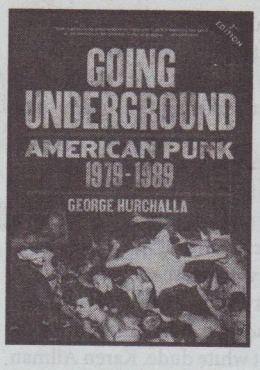
But even in this best-case scenario, life as a trans woman is far from easy. Juliet still faces discrimination, harassment, stalking, and several sexual assaults throughout the course of the book. Her column at *The Guardian* makes her a target for right-wing extremists and radical feminists alike, but she manages to find humor in their hatred. Some of the examples she gives of their transphobic thinking are sort of hilarious in their moldy outdatedness,

"Think about a world inhabited just by transexuals," muses writer Julie Bindel. "It would look like the set of *Grease*." (*Grease*? Does she mean John Waters films? Also I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty great.)

What becomes clear is that this way of thinking is part of a larger societal problem, and that the prejudices aren't just limited to cis people. Juliet also has to unlearn some of her own internalized misogyny. There's a really telling scene where she's walking in a group of trans women and, "Convinced I was more easily 'read' with the group, I walked on ahead. In particular, I thought Kelly, in her big hoop earrings, high heels, and leather miniskirt, was making us stand out, and I tried to distance myself from her." When someone throws a bottle at Kelly's head, Juliet immediately rushes back to join the group, realizing, "Perhaps we were more obvious together, but we were also stronger."

Juliet tells us outright that her goal with *Trans* is to alter the stereotypical trans narrative, and I think she largely succeeds. There's a constant refrain that she's not becoming a new person by transitioning, only more herself. Juliet also explains that she never felt "trapped in the wrong body" and that the problem is societal, rather than biological or psychological. She feels pressure to dress femme for her doctors and therapists in order to get hormones and be approved for surgery, not because she wants to reify gender stereotypes (as some rad fems claim). And when she finally gets surgery, usually the end of any trans narrative, it doesn't bring her happiness. In fact, she plunges into a deep depression when she realizes she's still the same girl crying to Joy Division in her bathtub. But there's something really liberating about the frankness of her admission, and this honesty is one of the book's greatest strengths. Juliet is a smart, talented writer, and it's easy to get lost in her story, even if you can't relate. I didn't always agree with her politics, and found some of her positions disappointingly moderate, but overall I thought *Trans: A Memoir* was an interesting, valuable look at how personal and political intertwine.

—Arielle Burgdorf



Going Underground: American Punk 1979–1989
George Hurchalla
PM Press
$21.95 | 399 pages

While this is marketed as the second edition of *Going Underground*, it's really the third. George Hurchalla self-published the first edition in 2005 and followed it with a revised second edition in 2006. This is the version I got, and I was a big fan of the book. "It relies on zines from that time," I'd tell people, "and covers a lot of smaller scenes." (A closer reading shows I was only about half-right on the first part.) Hurchalla and myself are both "a little cynical about oral history," as he puts it in the preface to this, the 2016 PM Press edition. Memory is malleable; it "gets invented in people's heads." The 2006 edition was intermittently footnoted, so at the end of each chapter one could see if some of the stories herein were from *Flipside* in 1983 or *Bass Player* in 2005. Hurchalla calls this 2016 version "vastly improved," owing to his increased contacts online and the editing of David Ensminger.

For the 2016 edition, three years were shaved off the subtitle, if not always the text, and the focus is solely on the US (the 2006 edition had a smattering of overseas content). Additional material fills out stories for the best-documented places, while voices from smaller and less-well known scenes were whittled away. The 2016 version is "trade size" (a regular paperback book), while the 2006 version was oversized, 8.5 x 11. A bunch of new photos and flyers were added and despite the reduction in the book's size, most of these graphics look just as good (and many are just as big) as in the earlier book.

The author covers the rise of hardcore punk, as this is what he got into as a teenager, and participated in until the late '80s. Owing to his origins in South Florida and his college years in Philadelphia, these areas are supported by his personal accounts. I don't see a great need for a book describing LA, SF, DC, and NY, as each of these (and the Midwest's early Touch & Go era) are well-covered by books looking just at these areas. At times it seems whole chapters are given over to the reminisces of Jack Rabid, Jack Grisham, John Stabb, and Kenny Inyoue, which detracts from the distinctiveness of *Going Underground*. Joe Nolte of the Last is quoted extensively on the LA scene from a diary he kept at the time. Stories like the look at Toxic Reasons make the book more interesting. For their early, extensive touring, Hurchalla places them among groundbreaking bands like Black Flag and DOA. Texas gets plenty of attention, as the colorful characters in the Dicks, Big Boys, and Butthole Surfers make an engaging read. Chicago, and Naked Raygun in particular, get their share.

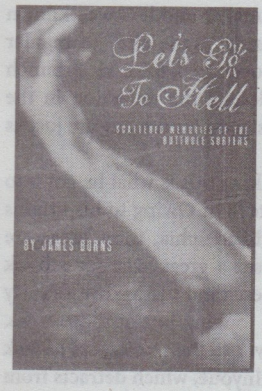
The revisions to the 2016 edition include some expanded looks at stories he'd touched on previously. The infamous Philly Black Flag show, where visiting DC punks were beaten badly by local hoodlums, is examined by Chuck Meehan of YDI. The story he tells is gripping, relevant today, and certainly believable. But, it's not mentioned when he wrote it, so if it was the next day or twenty years on, we don't know. The book has many undated quotes like this. Considering Hurchalla's desire to avoid "unchallenged errant memories," I hope future revisions better inform readers which accounts are contemporary and which from a later time.

The editing process streamlined to the book, but mostly to its detriment. Ensminger's work results in a much more readable text. The 2006 edition reads like it was written, edited, and published by the same person, and it's their first attempt at narrative and history. It's amateurish, in the good sense. The stories are interrupted by side notes before resuming, and Hurchalla's personal opinions, (like the ways in which UK and US political punk differed) populate the text. This new version is a book which is easier to read (though, it's still somewhat jumpy), but with many of the author's opinions and personal anecdotes excised. I can understand that, ten years on, he may not feel the same way, or may want to express himself

differently and/or better. The overall result, though, is less Hurchalla in the book. It's not like his stories are always the greatest or most relevant, but at least they're his, and the idiosyncratic approach was one thing I really liked about the earlier model. This smoothed-out version is certainly improved in spots, but much of the character is lost.

Overall, I prefer the 2006 version to this new one, but both have their merits. The 2016 edition is more focused on bigger scenes. The omission of Lawrence, Kansas, and the past-the-county-line venue, the Outhouse, was a great disappointment to me. At least Cincinnati and the Jockey Club survived the editorial process. As in the earlier version, there is an effort to represent the racial, gender, and sexual diversity of the scenes. With some places, like LA or Texas, this is more pronounced, but much of the book reflects the author's demographic of the straight white dude. Karen Allman of the multi-racial and -gendered Phoenix band Conflict has her input cut, although her photo is still prominent. For readers coming in fresh, the book is certainly worth examining. I was excited that both books are indexed, making skipping around more efficient. If I hadn't read the earlier version, and enjoyed much of what ended up on the cutting-room floor, perhaps I'd like this edition better. For me, the change from an eminently distinctive and diverse approach in 2006 to a more popular format (a trade sized book sells better) and core material (the much-trod DC, NY, et al.) detracted from what improvements there are.

—Jeff Mason



Let's Go To Hell: Scattered Memories of the Butthole Surfers
James Burns
Cheap Drugs
$38.95 | 495 pgs

I spent an entire work day listening to major label Butthole Surfers records in the midst of reading *Let's Go To Hell: Scattered Memories of the Butthole Surfers*. Mostly because I don't really know their major label records. I didn't even remember they released one in 2001, if I even knew about it then. Although I am more forgiving than most people when it comes to bands releasing major label records, it still doesn't seem to have made sense for the Butthole Surfers to do it. Even with their big hit.

Let's Go To Hell: Scattered Memories of the Butthole Surfers tries to piece together the story of the notoriously elusive band. They did not list the usual information on their records. They were not honest in interviews. The book starts out with drummer King Coffey answering a question from *Forced Exposure* regarding the band's history with a simple "It shouldn't really matter. Who really cares?..." With that kind of obstacle in place, author James Burns does a good job of assembling the story. It is a fascinating read. Burns gets interviews with seemingly everyone who has ever played in the band. There were many drummers and bass players. The only notable exception is that there is no present day interview with singer Gibby Haynes. Haynes' point of view is dug up from interviews done for other things.

The Butthole Surfers was formed by Haynes and Paul Leary in 1981 at Trinity University in San Antonio, TX. Both Haynes and Leary were on their way to getting master's degrees in accounting and business, respectively. They were a bit older and had more to lose than most punk rockers when they gave up their careers to start a punk band. As such, they went all in and without much regard for anyone else.

The Butthole Surfers lacked the usual type of punk ideals displayed by bands at the time. It is surprising since various bands and people helped them on their way in those formative years. Of course, their antics are entertaining. They strong-armed a high school-aged show promoter in Alabama into giving them $200 more than they originally asked for because they needed more money for their upcoming tour of Europe. Of course, the kid told them they could have the extra money and then tried not to give it to them. Missing in this story are the details. How much did the show cost? How many people were there? Those things make a difference. It wasn't the first or last time they would argue with promoters about money. On one hand, show promoters do routinely rip off bands. On the other hand, the Butthole Surfers were making more money than most bands at the time. They were also living hand to mouth out of their van. They controversially received $15,000 to play a benefit at a 1992 AIDS benefit. When called out on it, they maintained they deserved it since it was agreed on beforehand.

Burns gives the band a pass on most of the controversial events. That's what fans do. When discussing the Butthole Surfers leaving Touch and Go for Rough Trade, Burns writes "Though impossible to know [Touch and Go head] Corey [Rusk]'s take on it..." It's not impossible. You just need to ask him. He's still alive. If he doesn't want to tell you, that's a different story. And there's a different word for it. Later when the band sued Touch and Go over royalties and the rights to the records, the story gets a bit more detail, which I assume is because most of it was played out in the open. Though still no input from Rusk.

Burns overdoes it with the exaltation of the Butthole Surfers in the book. Even though I would pick Butthole Surfers over Jane's Addiction or any of the various popular alternative bands of the day, I had to roll my eyes a few times. Burns really lays it on thick. The most enjoyable one being "The Butthole Surfers was the band that record company employees listened to when they punched out at 5 o'clock on their commutes home, after their day of pushing Michael Bolton records was over." Maybe in an ideal world.

On page 326 there's an afterword explaining Burns interest in the Butthole Surfers. He came to the band after hearing an entertaining interview with them on WNYU in 1987. The interview spurred Burns and his brother to go see the band live. Then the obsession began. If this chapter appeared as an introduction, my reading of the book might have been different. At first it seems as if *Let's Go To Hell* is a propaganda piece written by a friend or maybe a member of the band. Knowing it was written by a fan and self-published makes it somewhat easier to forgive the overzealousness as well as the large amount of grammatical, spelling, and other errors. It would be a good idea to have it edited for future editions.

Although the Butthole Surfers' story is an interesting one, the reason to pick up *Let's Go To Hell: Scattered Memories Of The Butthole Surfers* is for the obsessive discography which takes up one hundred thirty-two pages of the book. Burns lists every release: albums, EPs, compilations, promo 12"s, cassingles, etc, as well as unreleased songs and cover songs. He goes into great detail about the different pressings as well as when, where, and by whom the songs were recorded and when they were played live. It is completely insane and thoroughly fascinating. He also lists every live show. There are a few errors on that list. I know the Rat in Boston was not at UMass and a show I attended in San Francisco on New Year's Eve 2008 is mistakenly listed as happening in Los Angeles. But I guess no one is perfect. There is also a list of rehearsal and recording session tapes traded among collectors. This is obviously Burns' strength. He runs the Butthole Surfers collectors website *The Anal Obsession*.

It is important to take the title of the book to heart when reading. *Let's Go To Hell: Scattered Memories Of The Butthole Surfers* is a view of the band through the eyes of one of its biggest fans. With that comes the lack of subjectiveness needed to get a clear view of the band's history and legacy—although that would probably not be possible through the residual drug haze.

—Carolyn Keddy

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

IF YOU DON'T READ THIS COLUMN, WE'LL KILL THIS DOG

Tom Hazelmyer is an interesting guy. It always seems weird to me when someone who was in the military is also into punk rock. In my eyes it is contradictory. Hazelmyer started his record label Amphetamine Reptile while he was in the Marines. He would record with his band Halo Of Flies while on leave and then run his mail order from his barracks. It is rather ingenious, but how did he manage to make it work?

The Color Of Noise is a documentary about Hazelmyer. The guy is a workaholic. He is also somewhat of a mad man. He started AmRep in 1986 because no one else would release Halo Of Flies' records. Then he started releasing records by other bands. AmRep started around the same time as Sub Pop and was almost a mirror image of it. Both released grunge records. The second band on AmRep was the Thrown Ups featuring Mark Arm and Steve Turner of Mudhoney. AmRep was similarly successful, even if they didn't have a Nirvana.

The Color Of Noise veers off a bit after the set-up. Many of the early bands are given their own screen time to tell their stories. Some are interesting. Some are not. It seems distracting from the main subject. Then again, a label is nothing without its bands.

Then there is the introduction of the artists. In the beginning Hazelmyer did all the art himself. Then he started getting artists like Frank Kozik, Coop, and Shepard Fairey to do covers and tour posters. I half-jokingly thought to myself "so Hazelmyer is to blame for all of them." But then it comes together. What is interesting about Hazlemyer is that he brought all these people together to do things that eventually got them noticed, even more so than himself. He is to blame for them and they owe a lot to him. People who are the conduits usually get little credit for their contributions. Yet here is a whole tribute to one such person.

The DVD of **The Color Of Noise** is actually a Blu-Ray + DVD combo (you get both). There are also a bunch of extras including a 1992 interview with Hazlemyer where he goes off about the Rolling Stones still playing, a bit on the Kozik designed 7" sleeve rejected by Sub Pop (yawn), live performances at CBGB from some of the bands, and more. (thecolorofnoise.com)

The title alone gives pause. **Punk Revolution NYC: the Velvet Underground, the New York Dolls and the CBGBs Set** seems like just another documentary telling you about the good old early days of New York punk. In a way it is. Beside the Velvet Underground and the New York Dolls, the only other bands covered are the Ramones, Television, Blondie, Suicide, Patti Smith Group, Talking Heads, and every band Richard Hell was in. I've seen and heard it all before.

Yet, **Punk Revolution NYC: The Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls and The CBGBs Set** manages to twist the story just enough to start to make it interesting again. The most telling being a comment made early on. There was a time when New York City was not the focus of the music world. There was the British invasion fronted by the Beatles and the US music scene was focused on the hippy bands out in California. New York folkies who wanted to get into rock'n'roll moved out West. Coming at the story by acknowledging that there was a time when there was little of a music scene in New York is refreshing.

The beginning of this documentary is. **Punk Revolution NYC: The Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls and The CBGBs** Set sets up the situation into which the Velvet Underground emerged. The formation of the East Village as an alternate to the overpriced Greenwich Village, home of the Beats. There was poverty and crime and things were bleak. The New York musicians were unlike the sunny West Coast free lovers. The music started to reflect that.

Punk Revolution NYC: The Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls and The CBGBs Set does not include interviews with many of people involved in the story. There is no Lou Reed, David Johansen, Ramones, Patti Smith or Tom Verlaine. There are interviews with Richard Hell, Richard Lloyd, Alan Vega, Jayne County, and original Blondie bassist Gary Valentine, plus some critics, book writers, and photographers. As always, the lack of participation by key players warps the history. Those who chose to be represented in these documentaries start to get more credit than perhaps they deserve.

Of course, when **Punk Revolution NYC: The Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls and The CBGBs Set** settles into the usual stories about the usual bands, it starts to get a bit boring. It doesn't help that the documentary is three hours long. Nothing happens in a vacuum. There were other punk bands, venues, labels, records, etc. It would be nice if someone could get beyond that CBGB hump someday.

That said, there are some entertaining parts of P**unk Revolution NYC: The Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls and The CBGBs Set.** Alan Vega is always enjoyable. His comments are caustic and funny, as are those of critic Robert Christgau. He strangely has gotten cooler with age. I also enjoy Velvet Underground biographer Victor Bokris. He is so stereotypically New York that it is fun to watch him talk. There is also some good footage of the bands. Since it is easily streamable, it is worth watching.

The CBGB of comedy was *National Lampoon* magazine. Sure, there was irreverent comedy before *National Lampoon*, and of course the style went mainstream afterward, but the early '70s was the time when things started to gel. Founders Doug Kenney and Henry Beard kick started the comedy careers of many well-known comedians, writers, and artists, as well as *Saturday Night Live*. **Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead** is the story of *National Lampoon* and its indelible influence on modern comedy.

National Lampoon was created as an offshoot of the *Harvard Lampoon*, Harvard University's humor magazine written by students that started in 1876. Kenney and Beard were students who worked for the magazine. After finishing school, they had the idea of bringing the magazine to the masses. Both were workaholics who spent exorbitant amount of time and energy writing for the *National Lampoon*. They also managed to wrangle some future stars into their fold. The more outrageous and offensive, the better.

Where **Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead** excels is showing the wild wit of *National Lampoon*. There is great detail of how the magazine was put together, the kind of parodies they did, and the topics they covered. Some of the stuff seems tame now. Nudity and drug use are almost passé in 2016. But there are still some things that titillate. A parody Toyota ad exclaiming if Ted Kennedy drove a Toyota, he'd probably be president with a photo of a car being dragged out of the pond in Chappaquiddick is in poor taste, but still funny. Toyota also sued over it.

Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead ends with the glory years of *National Lampoon*. The magazine continued until 1998, but it was nowhere near what it was when Kenney and Beard were at the helm. There is probably no need to mention some of the terrible movies that got made under the guise of being a "National Lampoon" film after the company was sold. So instead enjoy what **Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead** presents as the state of comedy in the 1970s.

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, Maximum Rocknroll, *PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. carolynkeddy.com*

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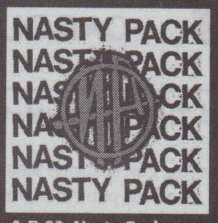

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A.R.04 Gewaltbereit
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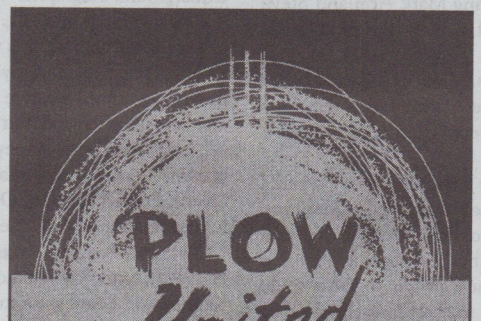

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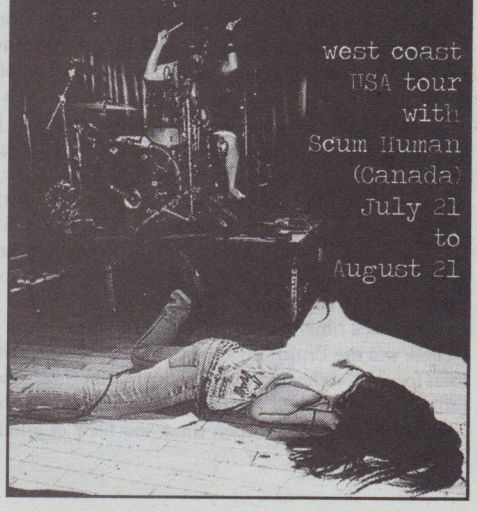

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RECORDS

Send **two** copies of vinyl or CD-only releases (if on both formats, please send the vinyl) to **MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, USA**
We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels distributed by major-affiliated distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include postpaid price and contact information. Let us know where your band is from! *No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork.*

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(AM) Allan McNaughton
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(BB) Brace Belden
(BW) Brendan Wells
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(DB) Daniel Becker
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EW) Eli Wald
(FS) Fred Schrunk
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(GB) Graham Booth
(GH) Greg Harvester
(JD) Justin Davisson
(JK) Jon Kortland
(JM) Jeff Mason
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JU) Justin Briggs
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(LG) Layla Gibbon
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(MM) Marissa Magic
(MW) Max Wickham
(PA) Pete Avery
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RW) Ryan Wells
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(WB) Will Blomquist
(WK) Will Kinser
(WN) Robert Collins

ABSTRACTER / DARK CIRCLES – split LP

These bands sound different, but I kind of feel the same about both of them. Both sides begin and I'm like, "Fuck yeah, this is going to be hella sick," but by the end I'm all, "Man…what happened?" ABSTRACTER starts off with very evil sounding black metal, and I love it. Then for the rest off the record they do some less than evil, and not that sick, doom meandering. By the end of it all I'm left bummed out and thinking, "Man, they really nailed that black metal part." The DARK CIRCLES side is better. They only blow it at the very end. They've got a FROM ASHES RISE vibe going on, but they don't get too melodic. They keep it driving, urgent, and intense. I'm actually pretty fucking into it. It's just that they do this super epic breakdown part at the end, and I'm like, "Aw man…what happened?" (BA)
(Halo of Flies / Moment of Collapse / l'Oeil du Tigre / Shove / Sick Man Getting Sick)

ALIEN PLACENTA – "Pindmassion" EP

Fast, tight, melodic hardcore that walks the line between scrappy youth crew and crusty hardcore and does a good job of it, both in terms of songwriting and production. The riffs are mostly posi and determined, but occasionally get a bit moodier. The two vocalists both play off each other and vary their own styles quite well. Just the thing to get the circle pit going. (DG)
(Abfall)

ALTERCATION – "Colonial Wasteland" EP

This band is like getting your ass beat after you took too much acid and acted like a fool, or getting chased by rabid dogs and they keep catching you for a minute but you get away only to be caught again and again. It's like when weirdos stare you down on the street and you feel like their stare pierces right through you. Relentless mince smashing! The distant pitch shifting vocals, and totally illegible logo take this one to the next level. Love it! (BA)
(Mass Deadening)

ALTE SAU / LIME CRUSH – split EP

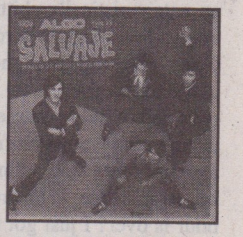
Vienna's LIME CRUSH sound less unhinged on this split than they did on their phenomenal debut 7". Their contribution, "Never," starts off sounding like a more up-tempo UNREST track or maybe WORLD OF POOH at their most seasick. The song has the potential to be a moody indie pop banger but only teases at the kind of hook you want out of it. It does have a kind of guttural sound that I didn't hear as much of on the first record. I'm not sure if it quite works here, but I'm on board for whatever this band has planned next. Until then I'll probably keep the first single on the play pile. Another Vienna band, ALTE SAU, contribute a track of cavernously intoned keyboard punk set over some upbeat drums. The song is sung in German and delivered in a *sprachstimme* (you know, sing-talking, *sehr expressionistisch*) that gets pretty grating. There's no lyric sheet, but I think it's about a horse. On the second chorus there's a beer hall-style singalong. It's fucked up sounding, but is it fucked up enough to float your boat? (EW)
(Fettkakao)

AU REVOIR / TYLER DANIEL BEAN – "Live at Dead Air" split 7"

Aaaaaaarrrreee you reeeeeeeaaaaaaaaaaddyyyyy tooooo moooooppeee? TYLER DANIEL BEAN sounds like ANTHONY GREEN, but not screamy, or some other emo singer who's just too sad to be in a punk band anymore. He's got a large band and two songs about his dead dog. They mostly do the pretty pretty, and they do it right with layering and vocal harmonies and some goddamned subtlety for once, but they also have one loud part. AU REVOIR are a post-rock band. The instrumental section, which is most of the song, is of course cinematic in aim, and is actually pretty successful in that regard, although they're no GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR. They seem like they're going to have a long and delicate build, but they just launch right into the heavy part after a bit of twinkling, which I appreciated. The best part is right at the end when the vocals kick in and the song snaps seamlessly from epic post-rock to lightly blackened modern hardcore. Both of these bands are actually pretty good at their respective styles of song craft, but if you're not tolerant of some emo, then you'll walk away feeling that this record is perhaps a tad maudlin. (LP)
(Orb Weaver Press / Tor Johnson)

BEASTMAN – "Reinventing the Wheel" EP

Four songs of odd yet straight ahead hardcore that oddly reminds me of FEAR but way more psychotic sounding. Real basic riffs and way loud shouting vocals. Their guitar player's name is Beefus, so maybe that tells you something? The last number, "Seeyalata," sounds a wee bit like DRI.



Pretty good altogether, but they didn't knock me out of my socks. (JD)
(Reel Time)

BETA BOYS – "Real Rockers" EP

I checked out the demo tape of Kansas City's Baddest Lil Boys a couple years ago and I remember them sounding a bit faster than this. Musically this lands somewhere between the CRAMPS and some barely held together alternate take of the first ZERO BOYS record. It definitely makes sense to think of them on the road with their actual tour partners LYSOL, a band with a similar methodology but a different destination. On my favorite track, the "Kreep City Strut," there's a bit of a RED KROSS or an Agnew vibe as well—totally petulant tones and guitar leads for aspiring surfers thousands of miles away from any body of water. As much as their "sound" has become more focused, this is an antagonistically shitty sounding record. You know, that straight-through-the-Tascam guitar tone, punching-through-drywall drums, vocals that flare up every now and then like they were recorded through a burner. Lyrically, the message is kind of prescriptive: freaky boys telling you to step back and stop acting so cool. It feels like a mixed message. Who are you to tell me amateur hour is over? I just got to the gig, man. As they point out themselves on "Slip Back," sometimes you get to hold the bat, but most of the time in this life you're just the brat. (EW)
(Eat the Life / Lumpy)

BEAUTIFUL SUNDAYS – "Besos Not Bombs" CD

This band from Argentina plays punky indie rock with emo overtones, along the ways of GET UP KIDS and the softer SUPERCHUNK material. Vocals in English, with four songs in ten minutes. This is OK. Their earlier stuff was more up-tempo, bordering on pop punk. I could go for a little more punch on this release, but maybe they are going for a change of pace. (RL)
(Piatti)

CRAIG BELL – "America Now/Annie"

Craig Bell played in some of Cleveland's most legendary groups, MIRRORS and ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS, and this 45 is a preview into a forthcoming LP that will feature his post-Cleveland output. Judging by the songs on this it's gonna be a most welcome demonstration of cool, collected underground proto-projections... "America Now," recorded for a radio show in 1985 by his band the BELL SYSTEM has a cool VU meets GROOVIES power pop swagger, if Lou Reed was a radical up against the wall motherfucker. "Annie" is a MIRRORS classic, performed solo acoustic but the song retains its sunshine sneer. What a great song constructionist, both tracks give you that secret feeling that something is happening somewhere. (LG)
(Violet Times)

BILL BONDSMEN – "Until the Razor Cuts" LP

This band has been playing for what seems like a decade at least and have always been good, but did a sharp and sudden overhaul of their sound a few years ago. What followed was a series of singles that have generally been good if not great, with this LP listening like a culmination of everything. The songs are generally centered around steady, dissonant, bombastic noise rock hardcore riffing with irate in-the-red vocals that serve as an interesting contrast to the various other eclectic elements that fill out a few of the songs such as organ, subtle repetitive vocals-as-instrument, and so forth. But more often the riffs are front and center and they write good enough material that even the relative repetition is satisfying. A great listen from start to finish, and for a band that spent the last few years strictly writing singles, their transition to writing a cohesive LP that has zero filler is especially remarkable. (DG)
(Mastermind)

BI-MARKS – "If You Can't Swim, Drown" 12"

Heavy metal punk from Portland that is as much JUDAS PRIEST as the GERMS. Blistering dual guitar attack that does not let up and just gets heavier and heavier as your bloody skull falls to the floor. Actually, I have no idea if they have two guitar players, but you get the idea. I think these guys might dig some ANNIHILATION TIME as well. Portland still sucks, but this rips. (RO)
(Black Water / Hooskah)

BIZNAGA – "Centro Dramático Nacional" LP

I think there may exist a "Madrid sound" of the 21st Century, or at least a signature vocal style. It looks like these guys have been kicking around for a few years, but this is the first time they are popping up on my radar. Seems like there's a lot of interesting music happening in Madrid right now. BIZNAGA is (John Waters inspired?) garage-punk with some *Movida* trappings. Particularly on this record I hear some creepiness recalling PARÁLISIS PERMANENTE along with a contrasting element of pop punk. Well-made collage artwork inside and out, featuring an insert booklet with poetic and incisive lyrics. (LT)
(Holy Cuervo)

BLACK PANTIES – "Everyone" EP

BLACK PANTIES: the scourge of St Louis punk, a rock'n'roll nightmare and a leather lickin' motherfucker. For the uninitiated, BLACK PANTIES plays stripped down, sloppy, raw, low-budget punk with a mile wide bad attitude. "Everyone" on side A has a real loose vibe where the singer screams "*I hate everyone but you*" (I think), which is the closest I've ever heard him come to a sweet sentiment. Something about it reminds me of *Raw Power*-era STOOGES or even LYSOL (for a more modern comparison). Side B kicks off with "Broken Brain," which follows in the same vein, but the motherfucker added a *saxophone* to the mix and it sounds sick. "Hot Tub Livin'" kicks the tempo up a notch to near-hardcore speeds and he extols the benefits of soaking it up in the goddamn spa. Shit is super catchy. If you like SICK THOUGHTS and LYSOL-style punk, track this one down. (GH)
(Lumpy)

BLACK WHITESNAKE – "City Animal/ Late Bloomer"

If you're like me, you've spent a lot of time wondering what it would be like if DAVID COVERDALE were African American. Unfortunately that question is not answered here but instead we get some damn fine heavy riffage with a female (?) singer that owes a nod to OZZY OZBOURNE in his youth. Not crazy original, but some really good memories of paint huffing to WITCHFINDER GENERAL come flooding back listening to this. I wish they would have lingered more on the crunchy heavier moments than the melodic, but not a bad record. Stay hard. (RO)
(Groove Mishandle)

BLOODY SHOW – "Root Nerve" 12"

This side project from Jah Nada of OBNOX comprises six originals of blown-out, distorted garage rock'n'roll with energetic riffs and demented vocals, plus a so-so PERE UBU cover. Honestly the production is so bad it barely matters. There's no lyric sheet, so I can't really tell what the songs are about, but the promo sheet (yes, even your favorite "raw," "don't give a fuck" bands have nice label promo sheets) gushes that they "take aim" at bell hooks. Basically, if you're taking sides against bell hooks, I'm probably going to be on her side. (AM)
(Heel Turn)

BRONCO-LIBRE / GEWALTBEREIT – split EP

I gotta say, this one really blindsided me. A truly cosmopolitan effort, Leipzig's BRONCO-LIBRE's side consists of two of the most beautiful and melancholy punk songs I've heard in a long, long time, with heartfelt political lyrics that are sung in French and—as the English song explanations say—largely focused upon the genocide of Native Americans. A yearningly melodic mélange of anarcho, post-punk, and emotive hardcore, the sincerity and depth of sentiment captured here is impossible to phone in, with chiming guitars and instant-classic dual-vocal choruses. GEWALT BEREIT—also from Leipzig—take a more throat-ripping approach, veering expertly towards 80s Italian hardcore with thin staccato leads and vocals that range from crusty ZOUO-like filth to a more gruff, almost Oi!-feeling style on "TV." This is a near-perfect record from start to finish, the contrast between the two sides always feeling like a strength instead of a distraction. More of this, please. (WB)
(Abfall)

BRUISER QUEEN / THE GIRLS! – Split EP

BRUISER QUEEN from Memphis play some mid-tempo reverb heavy guitar punk with female vocals. One '60s PANDORAS inspired original and a LOST SOUNDS cover. So what. THE GIRLS! owe more to the BANGLES and do it very well. If you long for a youthful SUZANNA HOFFS—which I'm sure many of you do—look no further. Me? I'm taking a nap. (RO)
(self-released)

THE BULEMICS – "Something Wicked This Way Comes" LP

I had no idea this band was still around! Not that they were ever *that* exciting, but I remember them in that weird late '90s time on the Junk label run by Katon from HIRAX (along with this tough-guy from NYC). Anyway, this is slightly above average punk'n'roll at times, but they're held back by Gerry Atric's kinda bland vocals. Plus the lame-oh titles like "Back in the Day" and "How I Roll" manage to make it even more generic. Ideally this band should've stuck to EPs, as there's a *ton* of filler here. The guitars work really well on most songs, yet lyrically it only works if you're a cretin that takes DWARVES lyrics literally. Also, the "pretty woman writing the band name in blood" doesn't make the cover stand out from the legion of shitty emo-metalcore bands of the last decade and a half. (JD)
(Slope)

BUZZ RODEO – "Victoria/Underground Luxury"

We have here two very cool, bass driven, punk/post-hardcore sort of songs. It's very much in the vein of SHELLAC or possibly the heavier side of JAWBOX. Side A is more of an up-tempo rocker that mixes a straight, driving rhythm section with quirky guitars and half spoken, half yelled vocals. The B-Side is a bit more head nodding, mid-tempo but still loud and pushing forward. What really works on both songs is that while the rhythm section remains powerful and loud throughout, the guitar does a good job of moving in and out and giving it dynamics. Two super solid tracks. (PA)
(Antena Krzykyu)

BUZZ RODEO / [PERU] – split 10"

I guess noise rock had to be alive and well somewhere in the world. BUZZ RODEO (Germany) start off with the best Steve Albini vocal impersonation I've ever heard. The riffs even sound like a dumbed down version of something from *Atomizer*. Unfortunately, they descend into some more basic rock dynamics, both in terms of vocals and structure, and it just makes them seem weaker for it. Also, everything sounds good, but this is noise rock. Noise is in the name. It should sound gross and maybe a little forbidding. By the end of their side, they've injected a lot of snappy post-punk stuff that just sounds too cleaned up. [PERU] (Poland) have a much more hectic sound, likely owing to their drummer, the slightly faster tempo they play at, and their singer sounding angrier, as well as singing in Polish. You can also tell that they've paid careful attention to their FUGAZI records, as they've managed to incorporate a kind of swing and varied songwriting that the boys from DC definitely had. If you like your noise rock druggy, messy, and rawkin', this may not be the split for you. But if you want to see what the Euros are doing with the style these days, there's at least a decent track from BUZZ RODEO and the [PERU] side is pretty cool. (LP)
(Antena Krzyku)

CAL AND THE CALORIES – "Jackhamma" EP

Better late than never, this 7" showed up in the mail in an empty box of Boo-Berry. CAL AND THE CALORIES are in the lunchroom eating at the same table as BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS and I bet they all make a lot of fart jokes together. Three tracks of KBD Midwest punk pop that takes hints from proto-punk glam: punk for sure, but it's all good fun and only as mean as a fake dog turd in your locker. Big thanks to pimple-faced nematode Cal for including lyrics since the vocals sound like a twelve-year-old with too many sourballs in his mouth. A+ perfect, go no further, if you don't know this record already then get educated like Cal did—"*PhD in deli meat / PhD in pickled beets.*" (BW)
(Lumpy)

CHARLES DE GOAL – "Mobilisation/Resistance" 2xLP

Are you fucking kidding me? A double LP? As attention spans get shorter than the lifespan of a snapchat nood, I suppose it takes some guts to commit to two full LPs worth of music. They're not even at 45rpm. From the artwork and the general sound I can kind of gather that there's some sort of apocalyptic concept going on here, but it's mostly in French so I'm not sure what it entails. Overall I'm getting real cyberpunk PINK FLOYD meets JOY DIVISION meets METAL URBAIN vibes. That simplistic and somewhat tongue-in-cheek description probably sounds terrible to you but this is actually really good, if a bit overproduced. The guitar playing in particular is excellent: brittle and wiry, like early XTC. I feel like this would reward repeated listening and I wish I could understand more of what's going on. (AM)
(Danger)

COCKPIT – LP

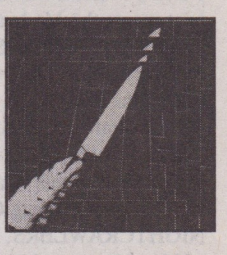
Rather good and fuzzy, modern psych garage punk from France. This sits mostly between a truckload of TY SEGALL stuff, DINOSAUR JR, and maybe the MEATBODIES (to use a more recent example). Granted I've heard this sound a ton lately, but these Bordeauxians do it rather well. Especially when they go all out on tunes like "Alpinism" along with the weird PIXIES/SEBADOH-ness of "Chimera". Lest I forget the "CHILLS on speed" of "Guerre Immunitaire." Worth yer time fer sure! (JD)
(Adrenalin Fix / Barbarella Club)

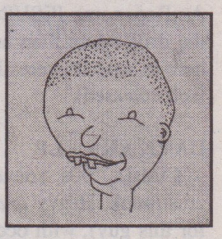
CRIME DEPARTMENT – "Exhibit A" EP

Bland synth punk with some kind of undefined cop schtick I don't understand. There are chunks of found audio from police videos, air horn samples here and there, a fucking cowbell. Some of these riffs sound like something from a commercial for spring break. Kind of catchy but deeply predictable, not bad exactly but incredibly meh. (MM)
(Big Ears / Jeff / Shove / Sleep City)

CRYSTAL METHODIST – "Give A Fuck" EP

There's some tough New England hardcore on this EP. The shouted vocals are on the edge of hoarseness. The guitars is rough and full. They can rip through and own the breakdown or use a chuggy mid-tempo approach with equal alacrity. It sounds like they practiced, wrote a bunch of songs, and used the best ones here. I even like the band name and the stark forest photo on the back cover. Eight songs, 300 copies, this is a good effort all around. (JM)
(Pine Hill)





CURLEE WURLEE – "Birds and Bees" LP

This is the goofily named CURLEE WURLEE's fourth LP, and if you are a connoisseur of French garage you probably have a few of their disques, but this was my first time. The cover art is like a bubblegum pop take on that STONES US comp *Flowers*, their sound lands them somewhere between a band that could have supported the TURTLES in 1967 and the DELMONAS or the PUSSY WILLOWS. The more bubblegum '60s beat meets the Medway of the '80s with added Paisley U / Riot on Sunset Strip affectations? Femme vocals are sweet and saccharine yet pouty, the Hammond organ relentlessly swirls (or is it a farfisa?). Half the songs are in English, half in French so you can indulge your yeh yeh girl dreams either way. The good songs will have you envisioning Chantal Goya fronting the NIGHTCRAWLERS, but ultimately it does sort of blend into one big Aspartame swirl…Maybe would have been more effective as a few 45s? Worth investigation if any of this intrigues. (LG)
(Moody Monkey)

CYRUS GOLD / T-TOPS – split 10"

CYRUS GOLD: screaming and chaotic (slash) technical rock rooted in noisy but meandering '90s emo...there aren't any riffs and they never settle into a groove until midway through "Drinking The Blood" *(the last track—and the groove only lasts for a few seconds)*. Sometimes the *ability* to play a thing trumps the decision making process. This shit is good, but listening to it makes me tired. Maybe I'm just not very bright. T-TOPS, on the other hand, are nothing but riffs; booze soaked '90s heavy/alt stomps reminiscent of certain MELVINS eras, a little AmRep, some JESUS LIZARD snarls, you get the drill. More than enough weird crammed in here to keep it interesting. (WN)
(self-released)

DARK ERA – LP

Classic '90s sounding politically charged crust/punk. Heavy *and* raw (the perfect combo for this guy), with occasional melodies ramped up to a level of an intensity that allows nothing but power to show through. The recording is loose, the vocals are throaty and rough, and these kids from Newfoundland aren't scared of finding a good riff and driving it into the ground (that's what you're supposed to do with good riffs, by the way). This one started good and ended great—more DARK ERA, less color by numbers hardcore, please. (WN)
(self-released)

DARK THOUGHTS – LP

Historically, if a band is described as "RAMONES worship," you can bet that it's gonna be some shitty fucking pop punk posers who locked their drummer away long enough for him to finally learn how to coherently play a 4/4 beat half as good as Tommy. Or it's just bad bar punk with an ugly haircut. DARK THOUGHTS broke that tradition, thankfully. They sound like they took the first few RAMONES LP's (or *all* of them) and applied their perspective of DIY house shows to the mix, making a raw, engaging, explosive, and propulsive record. Each song seamlessly flows into the next, building a solid momentum that lasts throughout the entire album. Before I realized it, I had easily listened to the thing five times in a row. Every song has deep hooks, driving beats, and a frantic pace that might make you think of MARKED MEN or JAY REATARD. It's completely infectious in that comforting way that will continue to grow on you over repeated listens. (GH)
(Stupid Bag)

DEAD HERO / SECTA – 12"

I was lucky enough to see both of these bands from Bogotá, Colombia, live at Varning in Montreal last year. SECTA packs so much energy and sincerity, the crowd wouldn't let them get off the stage. They transmit some of that live energy here for sure. Equal parts TOREROS AFTER OLÉ and UK82 with post-punky guitar leads that incidentally remind me of Barcelona's defunct SECT. DEAD HERO is an Oi!-inspired band with epic BLITZ style leads and bass-driven parts that take turns handling the melody. This will get your fist pumping for sure. Too few bands invoking this genre have a woman on vocals and others should take note. The vocals remind me of a less seething version of BARCELONA. Housed in a silk-screened cover with an insert including all the Spanish lyrics. Top-notch current punk from South America. If you get a chance to see either band, do not miss it. (LT)
(MMM / Rat Trap)

DEPOSIT MAN – "EP" CD

This Finnish band knocks out five hard-edged melodic tunes in the HÜSKER DÜ *Zen Arcade / Metal Circus* vein with a little DILLINGER FOUR and TOYS THAT KILL mixed in. Pretty good sounding stuff with some cool screaming and bashing at times. (RL)
(self-released)

DEVIOUS ONES – "Stylus To The Speaker/ Tuberculosis"

I am happy to report that this, the second 7" from DEVIOUS ONES, is less cartoony than their first one. The music is catchy, garage-y punk with a nice laidback style. The A-side is a tribute to listening to records, which I am sure we can all relate to. The B-side has rather idiotic lyrics about tuberculosis. Fortunately most people don't pay attention to lyrics, though some of these are hard to avoid. (CK)
(Rust On The Blade)

DIRTY WOMBS – "Crimson Waves" EP

Coming out of Patra, Greece, DIRTY WOMBS' newest 7" splits the difference between Burning Spirits-influenced crust and a more melodic-leaning take on hardcore, and the results here are kind of all over the place. The bright and bouncy bass tone and the major-key hard rock leaning leads threw me off for a while, but the B-Side's "Wrecked Youth" was much more to my speed—a well-polished slice of chugging, noodly mid-tempo. Worth highlighting are the abstract, evocative lyrics—clearly influenced by the current economic and political tumult within Greece—offering up an intriguing puzzle for those with the desire to ponder. (WB)
(Desolate / Imminent Destruction)

DISARRAY – "1982–1986" LP

This is an absolute no-brainer. Even in a catalog packed with hits, the 1984 DISARRAY flexi on ADK records stands out as one of their very best releases, and that record kicks this collection off in full. Dark, DISCHARGE-influenced mid-tempo hardcore with plenty of reverb on the vocals and simple string-bending leads that are more Swedish than Japanese. It's jarring to hear those tracks back-to-back with 1985's *In Search of the Miraculous* EP, which reflects a band that had gone through significant lineup changes and embraced the glam influence of the emerging Visual Kei scene, sounding much more in line with groups like GASTUNK and WARPAINTED CITY INDIAN. The amazing thing is that DISARRAY can pull off both styles with aplomb. The *License to Kill* cassette from late '84 that kicks off the B-side is a perfect document of the band in transition, experimenting with full-on guitar solos while remaining much rawer and more hardcore than the later releases, while the material from the self-titled '85 tape, which sees the band moving in a more metal-influenced direction, is the least interesting stuff on the record. It has to be noted that the remastering job on this is amazing, capturing the essence of the sounds of these releases while still ensuring that each would sound satisfactory on vinyl. Needless to say, this is an essential collection. (AU)
(Black Water)

DISSIDENT CLONE – "Creating the Consumed" EP

This is some totally calamitous, two dude, music symbol crossed out filth grind. Sounds like projectile vomit: I'm talking about the kind where it feels like your chest is caving in. Reminds me of GODSTOMPER with ASSÜCK vocals and tons of pinch harmonics. These guys are like a pack of mutant wild boar; they grunt, they squeal, and when they stampede, you better watch out! (BA)
(FTWNU2)

THE DOG – "Fountain of Youth" EP

Seven of the nine songs are pretty similar—fast, straightforward, catchy-enough, classic HC. The riffing can be hella tight and there's no wasted time. They close it out with an up-tempo banger and a mid-tempo stomper, the last being the least exciting track here. I thought the production and overall effect was a little

sterile—clean, but not warm. Not at the top of the pile, but certainly worth checking out. (JM)
(Long Walk / N.I.C)

DONALD THOMPSON – "III" CD

This Italian rock'n'punk band has one of the more original and bizarre names I've heard. Named for the Oklahoma judge who used a penis pump while presiding over an infant murder case, they get points for horrible taste but musically they get a big turd in a box. Super dull watered down NEW BOMB TURKS worship with wimpy vocals and no real bite or danger. I could make some jokes about limp organs in clear plastic cylinders, but really why bother? (RO)
(Retro Vox)

DRONEZ / NIGHTFALL – "Philly Käng Bäng" EP

Philadelphia upstarts collide with veterans in a battle to establish regional D-beat supremacy! Or, y'know, friends do a split together. DRONEZ follow their solid debut EP with three more tracks of straightforward hardcore D-beat that show a lot of Swedish influence, most prominently DISFEAR. NIGHTFALL come blitzing out of the gate with two tracks of nasty guitar tone, impassioned vocals, and rock-solid drumming. The breakdown at the end of "Mercenary Firing Squad" is absolutely brilliant. Old punx win this round! (AU)
(Ryvvolte)

EIGHTBALL – "Daily Routine" EP

Another fine slab of wax from Warthog Speak and that loveable family of Oly lifers, WHITE WARDS, GAG, and COMBAT KNIFE. Damn! This crew really knows how to keep busy and I really gotta marvel at that dedication to the game. Seven quick, highly energetic bangers that start with the Motörcharge / Burning Spirits / POISON IDEA key bump then chop it up into fat, hot rails straight to the reptile brain. Goddamn!!!!! Those guitar leads! (JK)
(Warthog Speak)

1 MIO SACHSCHADEN – "Mit Freundlichen Grüßen" LP

Absolutely authentic sounding modern DeutschPunk. Gruff. Abrasive. Catchy riffs turned into mid-tempo slogs that get stuck in your head in spite of the delivery, not because of it. I'm still not sure if the plodding, raw, bass-less approach is a winner or a loser, but I flipped it back to the front for another round to find out, which is something. And for what it's worth, this band started 20 years ago and they still manage to sound like quasi-inept teenagers…that, too, is something. (WN)
(self-released)

FIGHT THEM ALL – "Go Skate" EP

Youthful, energetic thrash from the Eastern Bloc. The vocalist has the same snotty, reckless delivery as the dude from SURF NAZIS MUST DIE backed by a band that sounds like a looser copy of BONES BRIGADE. It's bright, brief, angry, and spiteful. In my head I see eager, bright-eyed fifteen-year-olds doing ten-foot high kicks in the air as this band slogs through their BAD BRAINS cover (props on playing one of the reggae jams). This one made me happy. I wanna skate again. For fans of: abstaining from caffeine, fishtail decks, knee high socks. (MW)
(DIY Kolo / Black Wednesday / Too Many Skulls)

FINAL WARNING – "Demonstration 1983" EP

At this point, most punx should know Portland's FINAL WARNING as one of the first and finest American DISCHARGE-worship bands. This demo material is much more in the vein of straight-ahead speedy USHC, though the fucked-up guitar tone and bass-heavy drive hint at what would come. The energy and raw recording are appealing, but the truly essential FINAL WARNING material is on the classic *Out Of Sight Out of Mind* EP. The barebones packaging doesn't add a lot of value to this release either, as there are no lyrics or other supplementary material. (AU)
(Black Water)

FIRING SQUAD – "Endless Game" EP

Absolutely *killer* hardcore punk rage from Richmond, VA, FIRING SQUAD pack a ton of bite into the four rapid-fire tracks that make up this debut 7". The fast rippers on the A-Side recall the precision and power of DEATHREAT, while "C.T.O." finds the band taking on a more muscular mid-tempo. The breakdowns on the second half are just begging for someone to throw a bar stool into the pit. A studded fist to the face of society in less than five minutes, what more could you ask for? (WB)
(Agitate)

LA FLINGUE -- "Piss-Tape Zero-Quatre" LP

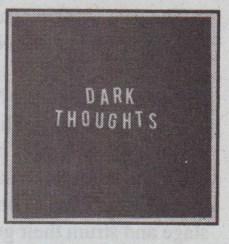
I coulda told ya just by looking at the hyper-neon layout of this 'un that we're in HATEPINKS and/or GASOLHEADS territory. It's that obvious and I've fallen prey to these kinds of tricks for far too long. Assuming those names mean nothing to you, imagine the French equivalent of the DISTRACTION or the BRIEFS: New Wave spazz married to '77 gobbing and delivered with a slick itchiness. It's okay and all, but it has no staying power beyond the initial spin or two. "Rocksette" is the standout here, but I'll forget it before I'm even out the door. (MC)
(Wanda)

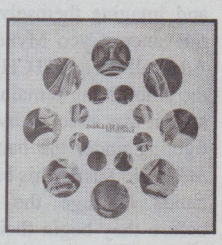
FLYING OVER – "We Are Outsiders" LP

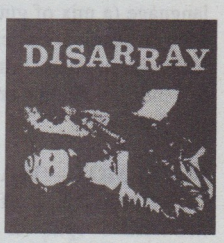
When I first saw this on my list, I was thinking maybe it was a reissue from the '80s Canadian (?) band with the same name. It is not. This is new and it's from France's famous wine growing region, Bordeaux. I've got to tell you, I'm a fan. This, as they say, hits my sweet spot. It's catchy and melodic, like infectiously so. It's got the whole male/female vocal thing going on. If you're a fan of mid-tempo power pop, you should just dive right in. No need to make sure the water is right. It's even got a sort of New Wave thing going on at times. And I mean New Wave as in good New Wave, not crappy ass, lame New Wave, just to be clear. (KK)
(Adrenalin Fix / Stryckhnine / Turborock)

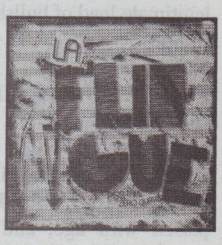
FOX DEVILS WILD – "The Beat Of Conformity" LP

F.D.W. stands for FOX DEVILS WILD and they're a German epic new wave prog anarcho band that likes to wear animal masks, makeup, and tails. You may laugh, but this is exactly what you'll be into in less than a year. Foxtails and bulletbelts. Furry crusties madly gobbling Alpo and mad dogging those with lesser corgi headwear. You'll see. This record goes from fast rockers to circus style sing-alongs complete with synthesizers that vary from interesting to fucking annoying. There are a few gems here, sung in their native German, that have a theatrical BREAKING GLASS quality to them, but most of this is third rate cabaret crap. *Nein!* (RO)
(Angry Voice / Byllepest)









THE FREEZE – "Someone's Bleeding" EP

The year is 2056. The place—Gilman. It mars the flesh of beautiful New Berkeley like a black mole on the head of a penis. Decades since it was abandoned to the New Führer of El Cerrito, a short, illiterate goblin by the name of "Cyco Myko," it now serves but one purpose: allowing third-tier hardcore bands from the late 1980s a chance to pretend to be young again, to stand on stage and strum their guitars and close their eyes and imagine themselves once more back into relevance. Cyco Myko sniffs a line of Cyber-Adderall off a RETCHING RED 45 looted from the smoldering remains of the Pyrate Punx HQ after it was attacked by marauding partisans still fighting under the banner of the now-defeated *MRR*. He hustles his balls with his ring-covered hands. Onstage, the FREEZE are tuning up before they begin their set. Now in their early 100s, the band survives on a mix of protein shakes (they got really effective around 2033) and B-12 injections. Cyco Myko recalls the year 2016, when *Someone's Bleeding* was released… it was a good year. The year he began to cement his power, to wrest back control from the PC fascists that were ruining punk by trying to silence him from singing about having sex with children. He grins, showing a mouth with at least eleven teeth in it, all filed down to points. The FREEZE. They had re-recorded two of their old songs for that 45, he remembered. But why? Why would they do that when the previous recordings were readily available and showcased a band with far more energy than the one who put that later record out? Cyco Myko did not know—and what Cyco Myko does not know, Cyco Myko hates. He claps his hands, summoning his coterie of denim-clad lads. He grunts in his peculiar language (a mix of gutter argot and rude names for gay people). The crocodiles who live in the moat surrounding Gilman would dine tonight—and they would dine on the FREEZE. (BB)
(Dr. Strange)

FUCKEMOS – "W.A.G.P.S.G?/Hot Fire"

I've been ignoring FUCKEMOS' side of that MOTARDS split for twenty years! Anyway, extreme irritant electronic piss-takes are the name of the game with this bubbling sewer of a single. The title track's true name is "Why Are Guitar Players So Gay?" but fear not: they mention "groupie whores" too! Enroll in their sensitivity class today! "Hot Fire" is a moron saga involving a homeless shelter ablaze. True time-warp assholes are advised to seek out the new RANCID HELL SPAWN single for quality muck rather than this fucked mess—you'll be much better off. A legitimate load of bullshit. (MC)
(Slope)

FUCK YOU PAY ME / TO THE POINT – split EP

I slept on FUCK YOU PAY ME despite knowing who is involved, and god damn was I a fool. Tony Erba has gotten far, far more pissed with age, and delivers with bile that precisely matches the words he's screaming, and sometimes even getting ahead of the rest of the band. The thick, abrasive guitar backs the music well and definitely makes me think of H100s and NINE SHOCKS TERROR, albeit not exactly the same. The first of their two songs is punishing fast hardcore, while the second is an almost as biting mid-paced gallop. TO THE POINT is a newer band with Chris Dodge on vocals and other old powerviolence players filling out the roster. They deliver straight-ahead powerviolence that's done well and with good hooks. Get this. (DG)
(Six Weeks)

GLAM FAIL – "Cyclone Rodney/Just Deserve"

Ultra lo-fi, introspective music. It is amateurish and recorded poorly. Yet, it seems so earnest and sincere. I would like to hear the lyrics more, but they're buried below fuzzy acoustic guitar. (CK)
(ever/never)

GREEN BERET – "Standing At the Mouth Of Hell" LP

A massive, hard-hitting slab from Boston. I hear the power and ferocity of POISON IDEA and TOTALITÄR-esque riffing in their sound, but with a burly vocal style that brings WARCRY to mind. Whether you're focused on the fast-moving riffs or the impeccable drumming (the thud of this snare is very pleasing), your thirst for hardcore should be satisfied by this. Nothing new here, very traditional in many ways, but top of its class. (MA)
(Side Two)

GREYHOUSE – "Dives to the Deep End" 2xLP

I remember being young and Jon Hiltz doing sound at a show in rural New Jersey in the late '90s. As we were breaking down our stuff, he proceeded to show us how to get the best feedback out of a JCM 800 half stack. It didn't matter that he was a drummer. We all listened. I mean, he was in BORN AGAINST and GREYHOUSE and those bands meant everything to us. Unfortunately, GREYHOUSE feels like they've been lost to following generations, possibly because they never put out a full-length record or because their stuff wasn't on the more popular labels of the time, but certainly not because their music didn't deserve attention. There has been talk of this record for years. So many years that at least one blog just gave up and posted everything they had just so that people could hear it (and even that was a long time ago). But here it is on vinyl and worthy of it. There are some issues. The *Revolution by Numbers* 7" isn't there. Neither is at least one compilation song. There is also a lack of information about the band and the songs. No lyrics, no history, not even information on the original releases. On the other hand, there is plenty of stuff that was not previously released on vinyl and the sound is much better than what has been floating around on the internet. If you're unfamiliar with the band, they were '90s emo hardcore. Their sound changed a bit over time but they were certainly influenced by FUGAZI and SOUL SIDE, which can be felt in some of their songs that rely more on a groove. At the same time they also had some more melodic stuff, in the vein of DAG NASTY. Their best stuff was heavier, though—more punk, more hardcore. Emotional? Sure. But heavy and fast and angry and screaming. It's great to see this finally find the world. (PA)
(Simba)

HEAVY TIMES – "Black Sunglasses" EP

Achingly cool waves outta HEAVY TIMES—fuzzy poppers operating exclusively in the dark. For tunes, all with a big '80s vibe recalling early ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN or the SOUND (see that goddamn sleeve?), albeit punker at nearly every turn. Closer "Choked Up" is sunniest and easiest to isolate, but this entire affair is comprised of would-be hits. Will they win your ear? Are you a bummer but still rage on occasion? It's all you, babe. (MC)
(Hozac)

HEAVY TIMES – "Dancer" EP

HEAVY TIMES has been one of my favorite Chicago Hozac bands for awhile, but...something has changed. You still get those amazing calculated melodic guitar leads over motoric drumming, but they're not doing BEACH BOYS on meth meets WIPERS anymore. They dabbled in synth on tracks before, but now they're doing it in a way that drops the "punk" from "synth punk." There's not much grit overall this time around (the lyrics aren't about getting stabbed), so it just feels like a punky version of the *Top Gun* soundtrack. If you've been searching for a 7" that sounds like a punker take on Robert Palmer's "Johnny and Mary," flashdance to this. (BW)
(Randy)

INFERNAL DIATRIBE – "Admission of Guilt" LP

This band is pretty good. They do a by the books crust tinged hardcore thing that is definitely rocking. The songwriting is solid, the playing is tight and polished, and the vocals are sick. They do a nice overview of hardcore themes with breakdowns, D-beat parts, and blastbeat chaos. They do everything just fine. I really wish they would just push it over the edge though. It's like, these guys would be a great house band at some punk bar, but I'm looking for something more dangerous than the bar. (BA)
(Pine Hill)

INFERNAL DIATRIBE / SLOW CHILDREN – split EP

INFERNAL DIATRIBE (formerly known as the NASTY) from New Hampshire opens this split 7" with fists clenched and ready to break your teeth. This is hardcore music—ugly, angry, and full of hate. Drummer that beats like his life depends on it, thrash-filled breakdowns that

also give off a YOUTH OF TODAY feeling, and a vocalist screaming his guts out. Four old NASTY tracks re-recorded. This was my favorite side of the split—fucking awesome! SLOW CHILDREN from Southern California contribute three tunes off their LP *Prevalent Emotional Distress*. They play what I used to call new school hardcore back in the early 2000s. Fast beats, melodic hardcore riffs, and a vocalist that sounds like the dude from STRIKE ANYWHERE, but in all honesty I can enjoy this band more than I could STRIKE ANYWHERE. This shit is not bad. Melodic hardcore can be really shitty, but this is done pretty well. Good record! (DB)
(Pine Hill)

ISOLIERBAND – "Kontrolle" 12"

ISOLIERBAND was a German minimal synth group who only released a cult two-song single from 1982 (recently reissued!). We have seven songs here (including one song repeated twice and one song re-recorded from their 7") and it sounds like a conglomeration of outtakes or home recorded jam sessions rather than any kind of lost album. The record has two tracks that feel cohesive, like "real" songs, that could have just been put on a 7" together—German SNOWY RED? Overall things are a little looser and sloppier than your average cold wave, which is what could make this feel unique to someone who really digs the genre. Tracks have live drums, some have guitar solos, and we hear some botched keyboard playing: all things that feel out of the ordinary for what the genre usually delivers. Check this out if you're a die hard for obscure European minimal synth, but otherwise I can't recommend this. (BW)
(Red Lounge)

KILLER KANE BAND – "Mr. Cool" EP

After he left the NEW YORK DOLLS, Mr. KILLER (*nee'* Arthur) KANE formed this short-lived outfit for this sole *yuuuuge* EP originally on the Whiplash Records label (which barely put a single foot wrong in the '70s—track that old bootleg comp of their singles down…). The tracks on this are not "1976 punk"; no RAMONES or DEAD BOYS fellow traveling here. Instead you get a stripped down, desolate, thousand-yard-stare, beer-shit bummer more in the vein of '70s rockers like early THIN LIZZY or other heavy '72–74 outfits like STRAY or COLORED BALLS. Thus, if you come over woozy and addled by merely gazing upon the heavy-lidded greaseballs staring out of yellowed and crumbling issues of *Creem* mag, then this is going to end up at the top of your stack by the turntable. (RW)
(Hozac)

THE KREUTZER SONATA – "Fight Songs" EP

Kinda melodic, kinda metallic, seemingly drawing from more commercial "hardcore," Chicago's THE KREUTZER SONATA are full of fire and absolutely destroy the four tracks on this slab. If I say this falls somewhere between A7X and LöC will the stodgy readers of this rag just turn their backs…? I'm just saying that would be your loss. Pretentious "cool" purists should avoid this, while fans of high energy, ripping dual vocal hardcore with loads of shamelessly catchy hooks will want to take note. (WN)
(Nothing New)

LAST CHAOS – "Only Fit for Ghosts" LP

Put on your helmets, kiddos, this here is a goddamned smasher. Rising from the ashes of thee mighty TEARGAS, Brisbane's LAST CHAOS' first LP already finds them with the polish and dialed-in intensity of a band with seven or eight records under their belt. The spectre of Japanese hardcore stalwarts like their namesake, CROW, is never too far off, but at no point does this feel even remotely like an exercise in regional and/or genre worship, probably due to the fact that the songwriting is so thoroughly and seemlessly brilliant. With powerful vocals tastefully soaked in a cavern of reverb, soaring guitar solos, and tight-as-shit D-beat hardcore drum work, this five-piece unit is a force to be reckoned with at any and all tempos, and there's a superb balance between great riffs and raw, unadulterated speed. How often do you see a band that saves the best material for the second half of an LP? The first few tracks are great, don't get me wrong, but every single track on the B-Side is out-and-out face ripping, from the blazing intensity of "Drugs" to the lightning-fast afterburn of the closing title track. Wait, wait, these guys have already called it quits? Say it ain't so! (WB)
(SPHC)

THE LAST KILLERS – "Wolf Inside!" LP

Italian garage punk bombast that was released three goddamn years ago. Punctual! Recalls the HIVES more than anything else. Wild? Possibly live, but this is pure genre exercise and only a moderately compelling one at that. (MC)
(Adrenalin Fix / Go Down / Stryckhnine)

LENGUAS LARGAS – "Abba Daddy" LP

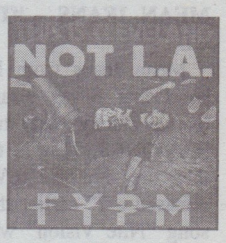
It's the heat, right? LENGUAS LARGAS has this dreaminess to them. They play garage pop with an unhurried attitude. I picture them always playing out somewhere in the desert, even recording this album there. The song "Heavy Bubbles" is this slow dirge with shimmery guitar playing that makes me feel like I am hallucinating. I'm getting a contact high. Best song on the album. The music sounds surprisingly together and cohesive with this many band members. Great stuff. (CK)
(Red Lounge)

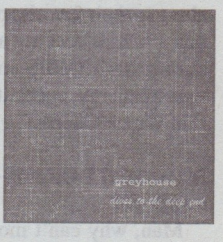
THE LIZARDS – "Road to Anywhere" CD

This is the second full-length by the LIZARDS from Barcelona. This is generic melodic punk rock recorded cleanly and mixed with a good dose of hard rock. The band's vocalist is definitely more of a singer than a screaming or yelling vocalist. She knows how to sing and she sounds like a badass. The songs themselves can get repetitive and a bit long, but not terrible—I would take this over a lot of other shit. Some are catchy enough that I could probably get into them if I listened to this album enough times. Certain songs, like the tracks "Beware," "Dirty Secrets," and "Free Time," definitely have more power to them than others. There is nothing especially exciting about this one, but this is a good album coming out of a country with a shit load of great new punk bands. (DB)
(Adrenalin Fix Music)

LOST LOVE – "Comfortable Scars" CD

I must say that I'm a little bummed out. I thought bands like this stopped existing roughly eight years ago. Maybe I'm just not around it as much anymore. Emo songs about broken hearts, anxiety, leaving this town, and listening to the radio. Musically, it gets pretty annoying, though there's an occasional decent tune. This reminds me of alternative rock bands that tried to sound like NEW FOUND GLORY in the not so distant past. These guys obviously have talent and can write catchy songs, but this was just annoying in my opinion. (DB)
(Stomp)





MADE IN JAPAN – "Instant Hit/You Never Had It So Good"

Can you say infectious?! Hozac Archives' latest, unreleased 1979 two-sider from the LA band from slasher flick *New Year's Evil*. I'm pretty over power pop these days, but this one hits the right spot with late '70s earnestness overpowering any major label aspirations. Heck, maybe that's why they never went anywhere. I'm always amazed at the sheer amount of shite power pop bands the Los Angeles region managed to churn out in that era, so it's sad when an actual good one went totally unnoticed until now. If I recall correctly, there was also a metal band called SHADOW in the same movie—they have a killer side of a 45 that came out back then. I think it's on YouTube. (GB)
(Hozac)

MEAN JEANS – "Tight New Dimensions" CD

Mean Jeans from Portland is a pop punk band that never disappoints. Here we have twelve catchy party tunes in the style of the RAMONES. This is the band's third LP, but their first one on Fat Wreck Chords. They also released a 7" earlier this year that featured the song "Nite Vision" which is also on this LP. In that song, the guys from MEAN JEANS show that they can write songs that can be less melodic and still play it well. The rest of the album is exactly what anyone who knows this band's other releases would expect—brilliant melodic punk rock. I saw them once playing a house show in LA with UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANDYLAND and I was sure the floor was going to collapse to ground level from everyone jumping around and singing along to their favorite party punk tunes. Anyway, this album is fucking awesome. If you like non-boring RAMONES influenced pop punk with tons of energy, check it out! (DB)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

MIDNIGHT CRISIS / WHACK & WASTED – split EP

Man, why can't more 'murican bands sound like this?! This is the kind of over the top exotic worldwide hardcore tasty that woulda got the OG '80s *MRR* crew's panties in a bundle. From the Eurotrash b/w sleeve I would've guessed Austria or Switzerland, but I guess both bands are from Germany. But don't let that stop you. WHACK & WASTED are dumb punk taken to the extreme. Super heavy over the top punk with one of the most infectious singers I recall in recent times—a real singular sounding band. MIDNIGHT CRISIS sing in German, three tracks of real rough hardcore with great raw and heavy production. (GB)
(Abfall)

MIGHTY SPHINCTER – "Undead At Hammersmith Odeon, 1987" LP

First off, it's really hard to tell if this is a fake live recording—just sounds like a poorly mixed studio session with canned crowd noise mixed in....but whatever. As a kid growing up in the '80s, there were few band names that stuck with you, where you wound up searching for the music...BUTTHOLE SURFERS were a mindfuck on a junior high school band trip. DAYGLO ABORTIONS were boring even when I only had like seven punk records. And MIGHTY SPHINCTER? Shit man, I thought this was third rate goth "rock" the moment the needle dropped nearly three sodding decades ago. I had the MISSION, I had SOUTHERN DEATH CULT—why could I possibly need this? And I still don't. The pretentious and overbearing faux scary vox are the only thing that keep this from being the utterly forgettable schlock record that it ultimately *(and actually)* is. (WN)
(Slope)

THE MIZZERABLES – "As I Am" CD

This Chicago band plays pop punk that borders on punky alternative rock. Tuneful and well produced, this is a blend of LAGWAGON and LESS THAN JAKE as well as FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE and WEEZER. This is decent and there are some standout tracks that mix in acoustic guitars, strings, and keyboards. I'm not blown away, but I can see a track here sneaking onto mainstream radio's "indie" show. (RL)
(Whoa!)

THE MONSTERS – "The Jungle Noise Recordings" CD

This record is a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the release of the *Jungle Noise* 10" from Switzerland's the MONSTERS. The tracks were recorded in 1994-95 (as it states on the cover) and this came out in 2015, though just making it to *MRR* headquarters now. I won't complain too much since I think the MONSTERS are very cool and their earliest stuff is the best. This is a re-release of the 1995 10" with a bunch of extra songs recorded at the same time that have appeared on singles over the years. The records go for too much money now, so for all you cheapskates who weren't lucky enough to get them when they came out (I was!), this is for you. This is some of the best primitive garage punk you'll hear. Wacky, fun, and twisted. Garage rock moderne kids listen up. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

NASTY PACK – "Nightmares" EP

German four-piece NASTY PACK do a great job of mixing a driving, rough sound with catchy guitar leads and *woah-oh* backing vocals. Their lyrics are in English, as are the song explanations, though the only song I didn't quite get lacks one. In "Getting Older," they're singing *"another day—feel the progress,"* which is a great attitude. They also touch on work frustrations (like how it's bullshit) and making the best of your fucked head. I'm all about this record. (JM)
(Abfall)

THE NAVINS – "Not Yourself Today" CD

Alternative college rock from Seattle. This label has been around for decades and someone in this band was in the Sub Pop grunge band TAD. This is poppy, garage-y, and a bit indie, with jangly guitars. I've heard a lot of this over the years, and have liked some of it, but I'm on the fence here. Reminds me of the CHURCH, the HOODOO GURUS, and GOO GOO DOLLS from the MTV "120 Minutes" days. (RL)
(Green Monkey)

NEW COLONIES – "Bleached Bones" EP

Tempe, AZ's NEW COLONIES play '90s inspired melodic punk rock that sounds like a mix between LEATHERFACE and HOT WATER MUSIC. This EP starts a little more on the mellow side but picks up energy on the second song. If you told me the third track, "Beneath My Blood," was straight out of a HOT WATER MUSIC album, I'd probably believe you. The EP closes with a catchy pop punk song, "Rot and Rain." Four songs in twelve minutes that you'd enjoy if you're into the bands I mentioned above. (DB)
(33 Forever)

1981 – "Acts Of Aggression" EP

While I can sort of see why this Finnish band gets lumped in with the new wave of UK anarcho-inspired bands like NO SIR I WON'T and AUTONOMY, this record mostly sounds like clean pop punk to me. It's super chill sounding, but very dynamic in the writing department. My partner Julia says they sound like MURMURS and RVIVR, but less-distorted. Skillfully played, complete with vocal harmonies and introspective lyrics that explore out how we're controlled by systems of oppression. The stapled eight-panel booklet sleeve looks really nice, but I can't really get on board with the sounds. (MA)
(19 in 81)

NOBLE SAVAGES – "Four Off The Floor" EP

Four tracks of basic garage rock'n'roll. This has a very '90s feel. It's kind of macho with a nerdy quality. It seems kind of funny writing that, but those of us who were around in the '90s will know what I mean. I like it. (CK)
(Transistor 66)

NOTHING OF MERIT – "Well Oiled Machine" 10"

I am 100% perplexed by this record. The record has so little information on it. Even the label isn't listed. The songs sound as if they were recorded live. The band is made up of three older guys, so you'd think there would be the requisite "former members of..." but that doesn't seem to be the case. The music is rather simple: guitar, drums, and sax, but it sounds like there is more. The singer has a voice somewhere between first wave Cleveland punk and second wave Dischord punk. I hope it is not the intrigue influencing me, but I don't care. I like this. (CK)
(Reason for Resistance)

[PERU] – "Krew" EP

Subscribers to the PRF take note: This record contains two excellent tracks of dynamic, turn-on-a-zloty noise rock with nods to SHELLAC, NOMEANSNO, BASTRO, and other such luminaries. I hear this type of sound attempted often these days, but rarely this well. Great stuff. (AM)
(Antena Krzyku)

PESSIMISTS – "O Plano" EP

Cool punk with a steady beat from this Brazilian trio. The bass has a strangely haunting quality to it, while the guitarist offers a mix of melody and discord. Each track has a good hook and multiple vocalists either trading off or yelling together. It really reminds me of a slowed down version of Madrid's SILLA ELECTRICA, which is meant to be a positive comparison. Six solid tracks, not a single stinker. (MA)
(Nada Nada)

PINNED IN PLACE – "Ghostwritten By" 12"

This is catchy, indie pop punk. At times it sounds almost like a pop punk version of WEEZER. At other times it sounds like a pop punk version of early BUILT TO SPILL. The songs are well written, the vocals are a bit nasally but still easy to listen to, and the guitar melodies are where it is really at. They are at their best when the second guitar gets real noodley, making "Radium Girls" the hit. They also manage to make the slower, sadder songs just as good as the upbeat ones. There are a ton of bands doing this kind of stuff but this record really shows how much songwriting and understanding of melody make a difference. (PA)
(Avocado / Razorcake)

PLOW UNITED – "Everything/'39" EP

This is one of those places where the worlds of ultra catchy pop punk and dad-rock collide. And to be clear, that is not meant as an insult. Who out there doesn't like at least some BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN songs? (Wait, don't answer that!) But seriously, if you had a gun to your head, you could think of at least one BILLY JOEL song you thought was "OK." For me that'd be easy: "Matter of Trust." Deep down, all of us have our soft spots for some arguably terrible music from previous generations. Some of us bury it. Some of us live with it. And some of us rejoice and celebrate it. And if the latter applies to you…If it's ever been a hard decision between playing an ERGS album or listening to classic rock radio…if you own a NATO COLES record: I give you PLOW UNITED! (FS)
(33 Forever)

PLOW UNITED – "Three" LP

East coast pop punk veterans PLOW UNITED are back with a new album. After releasing numerous EPs over the past few years and an LP in 2013, the band now releases their second LP since their long hiatus (1998–2011). On this album, PLOW UNITED shows their ability to write and play really good and catchy riffs while maintaining an overall punk rock attitude and not diving too deep into a cheesy pop punk sound. The drum beats thatspan from mostly mid-tempo to fast NOFX style, clean and melodic guitars, and on point vocals make this release a good listen for the average punk rocker. This record was produced by Pete Steinkpf of the BOUNCING SOULS and you can hear the influence on tracks like "Hello Vertigo." Enjoyable record if you're in the mood for poppy music with energy. For fans of bands like NOFX and DILLINGER FOUR. (DB)
(It's Alive)

PRISON MOAN – "Parasite Hole" EP

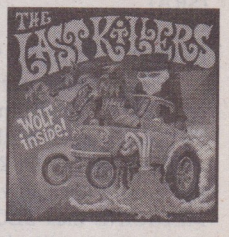
A new one out of Cleveland. I don't know or care if anyone in PRISON MOAN plays in other bands. It doesn't matter, this record rips. Like any standout hardcore record, it's all in the little details here: letting a note ring out for a few seconds, letting some weird phaser "boiyoiyoing" sound pop up, having a riff twang out on a single string, an occasional stab of what sounds like someone trying to hit a single piano key à la "I Wanna Be Your Dog" but being too fucked up on over-the-counter dissociatives to do it in meter. All this is low enough in the mix though, you don't need to be a fucking *audiophile* to dig this. "Getting Boring" and "Not Reality" both feature major riffs that will inspire serious pogoing or head-nodding for the spiked vest and cardigan sets alike. It's great to have another band in the mix that can both rage and groove so easily. The vocals are the one thing that does not have some strange production treatment under the surface; they just rage, man. Hopefully if you've put this record on it is because you too are ready to rage. (EW)
(Negative Jazz)

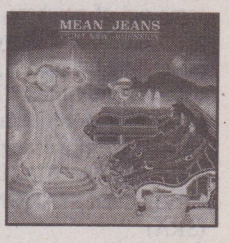
PRIX – "Historix" CD

From emerging genuine reissue label Hozac comes this compilation of Memphis's PRIX. PRIX was pulled together by producer/songwriter Jon Tiven and features the talents of CHRIS BELL, ALEX CHILTON, and TOMMY HOEHN, among other Ardent studio regulars. This is a dense record. The songwriting is busy and complex but errs just on the right side of overwrought. Truly ornate, lush, groove-oriented, and heartfelt '70s guitar pop picking up where maybe *I Am The Cosmos* left those on the search for BIG STAR ephemera. It's not hard to imagine at least four ambitious rockers throwing everything they have at these songs, but then still actually having fun with them. These tracks belong in the tape deck of the proverbial pickup that's being taken out for joyrides on school nights. Don't get me wrong: most of this veers towards the wimpier side of power pop in that RASPBERRYS kind of way, or maybe somewhere between the altars of McCartney and Harrison in the great temple of BEATLES worship. There are also a couple near-New-Wave rockers that Chilton would continue to smear out in the *Bach's Bottom* sessions, giving the B-side of this collection a bit of a rougher edge. These songs surely will see the light of day again as the BELL / CHILTON / HOEHN star continues to rise over the pop cultural landscape, but why deny yourself a good time when it's right here? Get in the cab, pop open a road soda, and get this one before it's gone. (EW)
(Hozac)

PSYCHIC TEENS – "End/TV"

Which band with the word psychic and/or teens in the name is this one? Oh, this is the one that would probably fit into that narrow/vast genre misnomer: shoegaze. This is apparently one of two singles released from an upcoming LP and I gotta say, this thing reeks of '90s college rock radio. The A-side contains the same guitar chord that SWERVEDRIVER relied on decades earlier, but with lesser effect. On the flip the vocals have the twang of Jeffrey Lee Pierce minus the passion and the throaty crooning of that guy from INTERPOL... with added passion. The biggest crime though has to be the absolutely lazy as fuck drum programming. The beats sound lifted directly from Apple Loops. If I am mistaken and this is in fact a human drummer, I really cannot in good conscience apologize. Call the A&R department and make sure that paperwork is ready for a signature. (JK)
(SRA)





PSYCHIC TEENS – "Everything/Nerve"

I have to admit that it took me a good 30 seconds to figure out what speed this is supposed to be played at. PSYCHIC TEENS hail from Philadelphia, delivering a droney and rumbling bass-driven post-punk that sounds like early death rock with vocals recalling neo-folk mixed with grunge and a touch of DANZIG. This band is an all-male trio, but "Everything" features dual male/female vocals, which is a cool touch. The melancholic tone at times seems like a satire on depressing post-punk. In fact, as I listen to this I kind of feel like they're making fun of me. I know they aren't teens and are probably not psychic either, and a weird drawing is mooning me from the cover. No lyric insert, though you can pretty much hear all the words enunciated. Daring and original, I'm at a loss for further comparisons, but I like and recommend it. (LT)
(SRA)

PSYCHIC TEENS – "Nerve" LP

"Please don't wake me / I'd rather dream it off." Eight tabs of druggy, droning post-punk, PSYCHIC TEENS' latest effort is a wavy amalgam of LOOP, *Zen Arcade*-era fuzz, and shoegazing ethereality (more PALE SAINTS or MEDICINE than SLOWDIVE or RIDE). The album opens with the sprawling powerhouse "Everything," a stunning declaration of the band's modus operandi bolstered by some fantastic guest vocals, which I wish had been featured more promintently throughout the album. They aren't able to keep the energy of the first few tracks up the whole time, and some of the more sparse, vocal-centric songs come up a bit short by comparison. Right when I was starting to veer towards disinterest, "A.T. Fields" came out of nowhere, a gorgeous little downer of an interlude that would make Kevin Shields proud, and the record goes out on a strong note with the aptly titled "End." PSYCHIC TEENS are another worthy example of the contemporary renaissance in swirlingly dark punk sounds along with acts like SIAMESE TWINS, PLASTIC CAVES, and STATIONS. (WB)
(SRA)

PUBLIC URINATION – "I Don't" EP

There's an unofficial tradition for noise musicians that at some point they have to make a throwback punk band. Here we have three Detroit noise heads following in the tradition set by VIOLENT RAMP and making some fun pogo and stomp-friendly jams (shades of UNITED MUTATION with an extra dose of snottiness). They follow in in the tried-and-true formula pioneered by our forbearers in Mom's basements across the world: press record on the boom box, jam a riff on the spot, and don't bother calling another friend over to play bass because you're running the mic through your only extra combo amp. 7" comes with some weird folded up paper scraps because this was put out by a noise label. Genius or disposable, your pick. (BW)
(American)

PUSSYCAT KILL – "Faster Than Punk" LP

Well, for starters, this isn't very fast. This easily falls into the slightly angrier side of the melodic punk genre. It's like when you're surprised to find out a band is on Fat cause they're tolerable. It's still perfect mohawk, eyeliner punk with the *whoa oh oh* backups and the generic sneer, but the awesome (if not over the top) female lead vocals are pretty cool. Too precise and pretty for me, but you could do *so* much worse in this genre. OK, there are two pretty fast songs... (DZ)
(Geek / Wolverine)

PU$$Y-COW – "A Photograph Of The Time We Laughed" EP

Wow, the promo pack included with this EP is longer than most people's obituaries, which also makes it more tragic than most obits. I guess they've become pillars of the scene in LA? That implies 21st century Angelenos now generate waaaaay more sympathetic tolerance for hack-work "topical" punk songs played at utterly stock rhythms without any real personality...at least as portrayed on this record. This record will be "in stock" at Amoeba until the day that place is swarmed by a zombie horde. (RW)
(Chorizo Bonito)

Q – "Hqw" EP

When I was told about an unannounced day show over Not Dead Yet weekend last year, I had no idea that I would end up seeing this band play the best hardcore set I've seen this decade in the basement rec room of someone's parents' house, and this EP does them justice. They play aggressive, blown-out, early '80s style hardcore via the present that relies on many breakdowns (possibly too many, but I'll let it slide), along with songs that often shapeshift, but always in a logical way. "Terrqr" (that's right, all the O's in song titles are replaced with Q's) sounds like if VOID had been listening to FRAMTID and 86 MENTALITY while writing the song "Condensed Flesh." The trebly yet thick and powerful guitar is absolutely perfect, and the recording is caked in delicious fuzz. Buy this record and see this band no matter what it takes. (DG)
(Lumpy)

QUANGO – "Fatality" 12"

Here's a twelve-inch French issue of this tasty little ripper from a couple of years ago with an added track from the same session. If you missed the initial release, there's a HYGIENE connection and anarcho/post-punk vet Chris Low is on drums. The whole package, from the music to the bored Northern Line vocals to the stencil and Pritt-stick artwork sounds just like as if the blokes on the cover heard ATV on John Peel in 1978 and set to work. Simple, direct first wave post-punk (from before that was a thing really) executed to perfection. (AM)
(Danger)

RANCID HELL SPAWN – "Eat My Cigarette" EP

I guess there's a first time for everything. Despite having seen the name RANCID HELL SPAWN in record bins since I started buying records, I've never actually listened to them. Fitting that the cover of my first taste would show a color photograph of a goat playing a bagpipe made out of a decrepit old man's stomach. I am not sure what the purpose of this music is—it sounds like an abrasive punk version of MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER. I imagine if it was being played live, most attendees would simply leave the room until the next band started, or maybe they have earplugs and prefer to frolic shirtless to the electronic madness. I think I will not be listening to RANCID HELL SPAWN again any time soon. (GB)
(Wrench)

RAT TRAP – "Constant Fear" EP

Boston hardcore outfit RAT TRAP have graciously sent over their 2013 EP, an onslaught of destructive and heavy throat kickers that I am only hearing of today. The bass slaps with gruesome, gurgling looseness. The drums and kick are chunky, and the vocals sizzle with rage. Raw, furious, and grotesque hatred pack each track with mid-tempo pit stewing wrath—the brutality of MIND ERASER with some of the anthemic and metallic licks of SCALPED. Only about ten minutes total play, this EP is a concise hot poker that does not have time to get dull. I'm not as versed in this style of hardcore as I was in the '90s, but this modern revival leaves that macho hammer time on the shelf and knocks off a jar full of rusty old nails. Very good and very angry. (JR)
(Pine Hill)

RECKLESS – "Eldorado" EP

Band #98,877 with this name. Chunky and dense mid-'80s "rawk" inspired hardcore à la "Slip It In"-era BLACK FLAG and maybe FANG and the SHRINE, too. This Oakland band has a generally solid sound and honestly seem like they wouldn't have been out of place at an '80s HC show at say the Olympic with SUICIDALTENDENCIES and the *IV*-era CIRCLE JERKS or in more recent times at the Oakland Metro with ANNIHILATION TIME. File under: pretty dang good even despite the corny BLACK FLAG/SPRINGSTEEN mash-up back cover. Also, please kill generic named punk! (JD)
(MMM)

RED KATE – "Unamerican Activities" LP

Musically, these guys are in a pretty weird place. It's like some weird drunk bar dudes in Kansas City, MO found an old punk tape in the bathroom and decided to go for it. Lyrics seem to be ripped and updated from both The Little Red Songbook *and* any hair metal band from the '80s. So yeah, there's a few highlights in here, some cool hooks, and it sure is pretty!

It's just too much bar rock for me. If I saw them live, I'd definitely go berzerk as fuck when they played that Nick Lowe song! (DZ)
(Black Site)

RED SQUARES – "Modern Roll/Time Change"

Whoa, I never imagined a RED SQUARES 7" in gatefold form. (Now) legendary Arizona punks whose raer 1981 single was featured on a *Killed By Death* comp and sells for a couple hundos. This straight reissue is pretty crazy. RED WAX. Full color gatefold sleeve showing archival photos and flyers. Too bad they didn't also recreate the rubber stamp that some inner sleeves / promo copies were stamped with back then. "Time Change" will be immediately embedded in your musical memory, one of the more unforgettable hooks in the KBD oeuvre, if a decidedly odd one. "Modern Roll" kinda plods away in heavy punk wave mode, and never got much play in these parts. Definitely cool for the elaborate packaging, though it may inch a couple other singles out of the box. (GB)
(Slope)

HANK ROBOT AND THE ETHNICS – "Elvis-Jello Mojo" LP

Frenetic garage rock. Hank has a high-register, warbly voice, hence (I assume) the "Jello" in the album title. I will also assume the "Elvis" is Presley even though the music would be too punkish for the King. I like the music. It is really rockin', fast primitive stuff. But I can't listen to this type of vocal for too many songs in one sitting. (CK)
(Moody Monkey)

RORCAL – "Creon" LP

I took one look at this ominous album cover—a man's bearded face and shoulders, no text—and thought, "Great Zeus's shoestring, is this some sort of Sparta metal?" I broke the seal and saw Greek song titles, though the project is from Switzerland…I didn't know what I was in for but I gathered that it would be dark. More progressive black metal than doom, this four-part obituary is almost an hour of ambient gloom and dismal blasting storytelling. The vocals are a little overbearing but the writing hardly allows you to pay much attention to that message. Simply put, *Creon* is a cold, dead concept album drenched in aggressive mourning. I could see this being a new favorite among epic musicians more than shrug punks. (JR)
(Bleak Recordings / GPS Prod / Grains of Sand / Lost Pilgrims / Wolves and Vibrancy)

ROUGH KIDS – "Lights Out / The Shame, It Grows"

Twin-guitar punk à la TESTORS is this California band's bread'n'butter, and they do it damn well. "Lights Out" is catchy '77 punk that flashes attitude but never trades it for the hook, which is memorable. "The Shame, It Grows" is quicker, darker, and more theatric with the guitars. No duds here. Released via Japan's truly excellent Episode Sounds label, but check Sorry State for copies in the US. (MC)
(Episode)

RÜZ – "Burying Stuff" EP

Welp, RÜZ's second EP is an utter dominator and stomps shit over most other straight HC shit I've heard of recent vintage. Classic stylings all around: powerhouse guitars that drive each tune into the next (if this is their recent set, they're killing it!). Actual lyrical snippets like "*Fuck the system*" and countless other proclamations, both screamed and pummeled, from the frustration canon. Yet more success from Lumpy land, but this charges rather than oozes. Great! (MC)
(Lumpy)

SCORPION VS. TARANTULA – 10" EP

The Arizona band with the weird ass name is back. I like them about as much as before, which is not very much. If you're a fan, you won't be disappointed. Heavy KISS meets the SONICS guitar riffs and a nice gravely voiced female singer like L7 or the SPLASH 4. They probably rock live, but I'm still not convinced. (RO)
(Slope)

SCUPPER – "Everything/Drown Me Out"

So these dudes have been in some bands before, but who cares. You can hear it right away. These are some sunny '90s indie garage grooves. It's mid-tempo, it's fuzzy, it reminds me of a mellower version of some Bay Area pop-punk stalwarts like J CHURCH in the way it builds catchy melodies of simple major chords. I bet they're going to have at least one really really really good song if they keep putting stuff out, but this record, while enjoyable, feels like a quick snack, which is I guess why people call it bubblegum. (LP)
(ever/never)

S.L.I.P. – "Mental Abuse/Stick It"

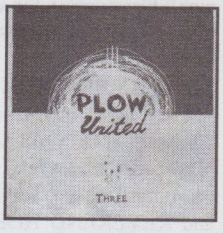
The newest gem from the same crew of Pittsburgh/Braddock hitmakers that brought you HOUNDS OF HATE, BLOOD PRESSURE, CONCEALED BLADE, and a million more bands. Both tracks have definite '77 vibe that reminds me of the DICTATORS, but what I really vibe on are the teeth gnashing tempo changes, a la BL'AST! (my favorite band since I was fifteen). They really give this record an ANNIHILATION TIME feel circa the *Bad Reputation* EP. It's a rough, interesting record well worth your time. For fans of: Lifted trucks, being a self-starter, Oakland. (MW)
(BHF / Mindcure)

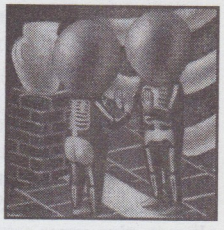
SHATTERED FAITH – "Volume III" LP

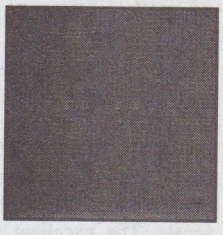
The SoCal punk legends are back with a new LP some 2000 years later. What does this mean for you, the listener? Well, not much probably. There are some winners here, like the snotty anthem "Discontent," and some duds, like the COCKNEY REJECTS-drenched opener "Rise And Fall." You can still hear the great guitar playing and vocal harmonies that inspired bands like the BODIES and SHARP OBJECTS, but it sounds like you'd expect from 50-year-old dudes still at this and unfortunately nothing more. Glad they're still kicking and supporting and inspiring younger bands, but that don't make me want to listen. Sorry, guys. (RO)
(Hostage)

SHORT LEASH – "White Blur" EP

Frantic and weird sounding hardcore, different and original in a way I can't quite put my finger on. The riffs are manic, a little all over the place, delivered with a furious blur only to drop into undeniably addictive mid-tempo jammers. And then the classic SoCal hardcore backbeat slips into "End Of My Rope" and you are fukkn running to flip this thing over to start again at the beginning. It's probably the vocals that really set SHORT LEASH apart—howling with an aloof modern mysterious HC distance some of the time, only to drop brutally personal and intense lyrics with the subtlety of a hammer to the skull. This one is a keeper. (WN)
(Summary Execution)







SIERRA LEONA – "L.A.R.R.A." LP

Lotsa late-entry Euros this month, as SIERRA LEONA's LP has finally made the four-year journey from Madrid to *MRR*'s review bin. Better late than never, I suppose. This immediately recalls CLOROX GIRLS and any number of Douchemaster or Dirtnap acts. It's exceedingly crunchy punk that's more concerned with worming it's way into your memory rather than stomping you in the gut. Not bad at all, but I won't be returning for another helping. (MC)
(Cuervo Music / Discos Humeantes)

THE SILVER SHINE – "Hold Fast" CD

This is a trio from Hungary that plays "greaser" rock'n'roll. A female stand up bass player who trades lead vocal duties with a dude on guitar. This gets very SOCIAL DISTORTION and REVEREND HORTON HEAT. When the woman sings she reminds me of the guy in PLACEBO for a weird reference. This is well done, although I've never been a big roots rock guy. Having been around for over ten years, I can see they have their followers. Fans of this genre will like this as they wait years for another SOCIAL DISTORTION release. (RL)
(Wolverine)

SKIPLICKERS – "D.E.A.F." EP

I saw these guys years ago in Manchester and I remember thinking to myself that they could really play. There was a sense of irony there that is important when playing raw punk by the numbers. That summation stands true still. If you can't tell by the cover, they like Swedish D-Beat quite a lot. This is a pretty damn good job at some sort of England meets Sweden in a beer soaked alley to play super saturated raw punk chaos. I don't want to downplay the shrewd hooks and execution here. This could be blasting at any punk house making people mental across the street. The recording is good and really brings their style to the forefront. Sometimes that is hard to do when hammering out fast and furious songs that rely on attitude and fidelity more than technical wizardry. They nailed it here. This EP is solid. (WK)
(Kids of the Lughole)

S.K.T.C. – "Hard Core Trash Punk Demo" LP

Blazing! Obviously crossover had reached Poland by 1990 because this is some ripping metallic hardcore with a ton of CRYPTIC SLAUGHTER influence and a touch of New York-style à la CRUMBSUCKERS. Blastbeats, circle pit-inducing breakdowns, and creepy-crawling riffs abound, all topped by clean, youth crew style vocals. The excellent packaging includes tons of photos, lyrics, and a long interview with the band (It's all in Polish, so its utility to you may be minimal). I know crossover's not the in thing these days, but if you're into the style at all, this is definitely worth checking out. It's amazing how many gems are still trickling out from the Eastern European vaults. (AU)
(Black Wednesday / Factory Underground / N.I.C)

THE SLEEPING AIDES AND RAZORBLADES – "L.A.M.F. / Weekend"

I'm struggling with pic-sleeves this month. This one is just kind of weird and left me with no idea what to expect. I certainly didn't expect super tight, super catchy power pop, but that's what I got. Based on the names of the band members, I'm guessing that these guys are from Japan. The band name comes from the title of an EXPLODING HEARTS song, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that they've got a similar sound. What might come as a surprise is that they really pull it off well. It's easy to want to have a sound reminiscent of the EXPLODING HEARTS, it's another thing to succeed. (KK)
(Episode)

SON OF A GUN – "Co-Pay" EP

The music is good. I like it. I'm having a hard time getting over the fact that the pic-sleeve looks almost like an afterthought. It's practically illegible. I need to get over it. It's driving, garage-y rock'n'roll delivered at a steady pace and it occasionally reminds me of '70s guitar rock like LED ZEPPELIN. Or is it the MONKEES? These guys have definitely been listening to their fair share of Nuggets compilations. Quality effort. (KK)
(Lo-Fi Supply)

SOUL GLO – LP

Intense sounds for intense times courtesy of Philadelphia's SOUL GLO. This record is a compilation of the band's first two cassette EPs. It's post-hardcore, less aligned with UNIVERSAL ORDER OF ARMAGEDDON or whatever than the kind of music that has spoken word interludes, melodic guitar lines, blast beats, bass arpeggios, the bell on the ride cymbal, etc. If you're trying to feel this one out, I'd recommend starting with side B (which is the first EP, strangely enough) which has the more concise tracks. It's an offputtingly earnest approach in this day and age, but feels appropriate for the gravity (no pun intended) of the lyrics. The lyrics are gut wrenchingly personal and unfortunately relevant, all about the existential despair of being a black person in a nation that was founded on denying your right to live. The vocal delivery is all the way to ten, screamed out at the top of the lungs without regard for hook or form. It's all very raw, which I think other folks might appreciate even if they have little patience for blast beats or that kind of thing. (EW)
(SRA)

SPIT PINK – "Night Of The Lizard!" LP

The cover of this record has a graphic novel-esque comic cartoon, and I am trying to understand if this is a concept album. This band is German and the music sounds like a very poppy caricature of punk music, kind of like how the HIVES are fake edgy punk music with all the rock'n'roll moves. I guess it's weird to me because all the lyrics are in English and seem really genuine and heartfelt, but it feels somehow hollow. Maybe I'm just not the right age—it probably sounds great if you're either fifteen years old or in your fifties with frosted tips. Elaborate packaging with lyric insert and download code. (GB)
(Wanda)

SPOKENEST – "Gone, Gone, Gone" LP

SPOKENEST is a drums and guitar duo (Adrian and Daryl from GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE) with a distinctive sound. The closest thing I can compare them to is early '90s SUPERCHUNK, but more emotive and a bit more odd. *Gone, Gone, Gone* is as discordant as it is melodic, with stripped down steadfast drums heavy on the kick pedal that make up for their lack of bass. The frenetic punk guitar keeps things cohesive but isn't afraid to fray or just utterly fall apart. Daryl has a mellow voice, while Adrian's forceful yells are fierce and urgent. Songs titles are simple words—"Back," "Wrote," "Gone"—and lyrics are also kept to their poetic bare bones. No frills needed, this is just solid garage at its best. (CR)
(self-released)

STALLED MINDS – "Underground" EP

Is anyone talking about this band yet? They should be. I'm shortlisting this record straight to my year-end top ten. Hailing from Paris, they just did an East Coast Tour with YOUTH AVOIDERS, with whom they share two members. The VICIOUS meets the OBSERVERS, but with enough creative distance to keep things fresh and not just a rehashing of that golden era. The effects also work really well and give it a tinge of post-punk WIPERS feel, but sped up to pogo speed. Featuring six tracks with not a single dud amongst them—just pure melodic/melancholic and catchy super-bangers. But how am I supposed to sing along without a lyric sheet? Anyway, really hope I get to see this band sometime soon. Extremely recommended. (LT)
(Kids of the Lughole)

STRESS – "84–95" LP

So many bands named STRESS! This is the Polish one, keep 'em straight. Things don't really pick up until about four songs in, when these guys start playing faster. They're very melodic in a fun and sometimes dark way, and the guitarist is fond of his flanger pedal. This material seems to have been culled from old worn cassettes, resulting in an inconsistent, sometimes warbly and very lo-fi sound quality. Shame, because many of the catchier tracks would probably come across more powerfully with a better restoration. The second half of Side B shows them with a little more hardcore influence, more in the vein of DEZERTER and REJESTRACJA. Unfortunately I can't read Polish, so I can't determine much from the extensive liner notes, but it's cool to see so much content packed into this release. Evidently a really cool band that fans of Polish punk should check out. (MA)
(Dos Gatos / N.I.C / Underground Factory)

STRUGGLE MANIFESTO – "Misja" EP

Do you like classic grind bands like REPULSION and BRUTAL TRUTH? Do you like uncompromising, non-stop blastbeat bludgeoning? Are you into bands that are too metal for the punks and too raw for the metal heads? Bands that only filthy crust fucks could love? Are you looking for a band that makes you want to stitch their patch to your face? Poland's STRUGGLE MANIFESTO might be the one for you. (BA)
(Extinction / N.I.C / Still We Fight)

STRUL – "7 Spårs" EP

Punk wouldn't be the same without a bunch of degenerates playing lo-fi, no frills hardcore for no other reason than fun. Some strike mediocrity and some strike gold. STRUL are sort of on their way to gold, but not quite there yet. This EP reminds me of beer fueled nights in a cold basement playing punk rock on old vintage amps with a friend screaming over the top on a ragged PA and having a party. Don't get me wrong, though, that deserves to be captured on wax in some cases. This is one of those cases—the music is played right and everything flows together well. They remind me of some bands in the early '00s, something like the drive of early SPASM 151 mixed with the cleaner garage hardcore style of REGULATIONS, but not the quite the same in execution as either band. They have drive and hooks that are all in the right place. The recording is pretty scrappy, which gives it some bite. I can't understand the lyrics, but they are scream/shouted with conviction and spite. This isn't a band reinventing the wheel but one that's just doing a good job of playing—and that is still valid. I'm guessing this band is great to see live as the energy abounds in their songs. Check them out if you like lo-fi Scandinavian hardcore like it used to be. (WK)
(Levande Begravd)

SUN CHILDREN SUN – 12"

All I can say is these guys must be true goofy weirdoes. Hardcore riffs, grind tempos, clean guitar, video game sound effect synth, no bass, some flute, cats, rapping, anti-pizza price, and a sound clip of a bong rip. Oh, and did I mention "The Pink Panther Theme" as well as some other oddball covers that last just long enough for you to realize what they're playing? Even at 45 this is a long record. A repress of two previous releases, if I'm not mistaken. If it was way distorted, I'd probably love it all, but it is definitely more baffling this way, all clean but not polished. Though they sound nothing like them, they have the same sugar-high-wearing-the-pizza-box-as-a-hat energy that I get from the odd SLIGHT SLAPPERS track. Let's da stoned, everything is sux indeed. (LP)
(SPHC)

SURFBORT – EP

Out of New York, this new band gives us a fucking awesome four-song debut. Catchy, grungy, and trashy nihilistic punk anthems. The first song's like if Kim Gordon was trying to do her best LUMPY impression. The other three rage a little harder and could be compared to *Smell the Magic*-era L7 or the better Seattle '92 punk bands. Is your life a mess? Then here's your soundtrack! Featuring the editor of *Birdflu* fanzine! (FS)
(Slope)

LES SUZARDS – LP

A straightforward garage punk band from Bordeaux. No frills and that's what makes this great. I don't want any of that extraneous stuff in my music. Just lay it on me. LES SUZARDS do. Turn it up! (CK)
(Wanda)

LES SUZARDS – "Sick Sick Sick" EP

French garage punk outfit that has the good taste to get a record out on a label that takes their name from a TV KILLERS LP (best French punkers of the '90s). Four songs with loud-but-not-slick production, which works best in a JOHNNY THUNDERS-meets-RADIO BIRDMAN vibe on the second song, "Je Ne Veux Pas De Toi." If you are cornering the market on the current French scene, there are few bands to obsess over first, but these guys ain't half bad. (RW)
(Adrenalin Fix / Barbarella Club)

TETSU-AREI – "IV" LP

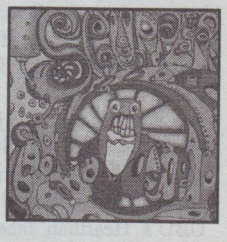
Rejoice, punks, because with this vinyl pressing you get another chance to pick up one of the very best hardcore punk releases of this young century. *IV* showcases a 30(!)-year-old band at the top of their motherfucking game, combining relentless hardcore drive with super-catchy rock'n'roll licks and one of the most swaggering, self-confident performances ever captured in a studio. Vocalist Butaman, along with Tokurow (BASTARD) and Ishiya (DEATH SIDE), is one of the triumvirate of greatest Japanese hardcore singers of all time, and his melodic yet gravelly rasp is in incredible form here, supported by group backing vocals that range from tough-guy shouts to poppy "whoah-ohs." The guitar and bass duel for dominance throughout, rarely performing the same riff in sync but always following the same melodic line. For every ripping guitar lead or solo there's a moment where the bass playing offers up a "holy shit" moment as well. Marvel at how they pull off the heavy yet ballad-like "Cloud"! Shake your ass to the rocking riff of "Pridustar"! Thrash your fuckin' face off to "Loud"! Embrace the fact that you're going to be singing along to choruses like "*Give me chocolate!*" and "*Jet roller coaster*"! Fucking hell, I've been listening to this record for about a year and a half at this point and it still kicks my ass every single time. The packaging is basically the same as the CD release, with the huge additional benefit of English translated lyrics so you can know what the more strangely titled songs are really about. Bottom line: this is a must have. Pay any price, do anything you have to do to grab a copy. If there's only one left in the distro box, push your friends out of the way and trample their bodies to grab it. Friendships are only temporary, records this great are once in a lifetime. (AU)
(Break the Records)

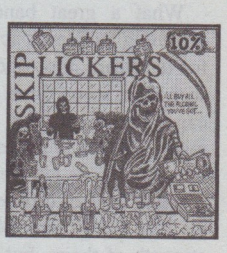
TOUGH SHITS – "Action Breeze / Adult Fantasy"

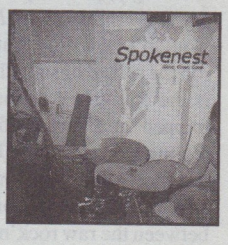
I don't think it's a real secret that most bands that have names like TOUGH SHITS usually really aren't all that tough. I mean, if this is news to you, I apologize. (Ask me about Santa later.) I actually don't know if these guys are tough or not, but this record is bad ass, seriously bad ass. And it's bad ass in a rock'n'roll sort of way as much as it is in a punk sort of way. The A-Side is crazy catchy and has a strange ethereal flow to it that is only amplified by the lead guitar. And the B-Side doesn't let up a bit. I'm a big fan of being able to hear vocal, bass, guitar, and drums, when each is an equal contributor. And as I look at the back cover, I see that one of the dudes is smoking a cigarette, so it seems that maybe they really are tough. This is Top 10 of 2016 material for me. 100 on colored vinyl, 500 on black. Get moving. (KK)
(Oops Baby)

TWINKEYZ – "Alpha Jerk" LP

Northern California didn't produce many full-length LPs during the first New Wave/punk era; tons of fantastic 45s and EPs, but LPs not so much. This TWINKEYZ LP from







1979 Sacramento was clearly one of the best to get out pre-'80s—in fact one of the best of the West Coast class taken as a whole. It followed a string of self-released EPs starting in 1977 on their own Twirk/Grok label that established their sonic template: a hazy'n'fuzzed VELVET UNDERGROUND-meets-proto-punk sound that would have vibed perfectly with fellow travelers like SIMPLY SAUCER if only each had known the other existed. This LP originally came out on the Dutch label (??) Plurex, who were in the middle of a shit-hot run of primal '77-type punk (FILTH, TITS, MOLLESTERS) and moving towards an electronic post-punk sound that would be just as defining (MINNY POPS, NASMAK). So, this record got kinda, uh, "mis-filed" by humanity at the time—a real shame. If their record had come out on PERE UBU's Hearthan label then maybe the story would have been different back then. There was a comp on the Anopheles label from fifteen years ago that included these tracks, but this is the first stand-alone reissue of *Alpha Jerk*, the LP. Don't make the same mistake your Mom made by having you. (RW)
(S-S)

LA URSS – "Maravillas del Mundo" LP

What a great band. LA URSS has been charming audiences across Europe and the USA for ten years now, and I'm grateful for having seen them many times and for finally having my eager hands on their third album! These four miscreants really refined their sound on their last LP, *Sonidos de Un Derrumba*, but now, despite residing in three different cities in Spain, they've evolved even more. Melody has always been a strength of theirs, but now you hear a lot more of it in the vocals. Africo's voice still remains as untamed as ever, just more measured and sensitive to the other instruments. There are so many earworms on this record, a different song is stuck in my head every day. But the closer, "El Lamento," is a fucking epic punk song. All the rich guitar and bass textures interplaying throughout this record will have you blowing all that noise punk you listen to out your ass. My friends: please don't ever grow up and get real jobs and break up. This LP makes me wanna be punk forever. (MA)
(La Corporacion / MMM)

VAASKA – "Futuro Primitivo" EP

Sometimes it's too easy to say something sounds "D-beat" or "raw," especially when you're trying to find the words to describe something crushingly, perfectly uncomfortable. You could say those things about *Futuro Primitivo* and they wouldn't be wrong, but in trying to peg it you'd rob the record of something. Listening to this slab is the equivalent of losing teeth. It's like being trapped in a factory fire or the numb, angelic feeling you get after being sucker punched in the face—that weird mix of indignation, relief, acceptance, and accomplishment. Somewhere between the raw rock'n'roll attack of SKITKIDS with the knuckle-dragging, mid-tempo fury of Midwest hardcore, especially on the eponymous track. Beach Impediment still hasn't put out a bad record. For fans of: chew, clubmasters, committing crimes. (MW)
(Beach Impediment)

VILE INTENT – "Machine Into Flesh" LP

Nasty Canadian hybrid drops first twelve-inch slab. Intense and brutal PV/grind/HC rippers. One after another. "Deny The Cure" is the Cream Of The Wax, but these inches are loaded with pure bangers…fast and mean, VILE INTENT are as lyrically visceral and thought-provoking (boys, we need to talk about "Fate Of The Foreskin") as they are sonically devastating. This band has been rolling for more than half a decade….and this first full length was worth the wait. (WN)
(self-released)

VIOLENT ARREST – "Authors of Our Own Demise" EP

Despite having been around for a decade, this is my first time hearing this, and I am knocked on my ass. Angry and burly as hell hardcore with a huge, blown-out sound, gripping choruses that just beg to be sung along to, and well-placed samples (remember when bands did this regularly?) that both back up the sentiment and show that they don't take themselves *too* seriously. Whether they're pulling a thrashy pace, keeping it fast and steady, or slowing down to a gallop or mid-pace, the power is there, the songs match the speed well, and the simple but bleak riffs back it all up. That this record and band are removed from punk trends at any given time gives it an especially timeless feel. (DG)
(Artcore)

VISITORS – "Poet's End" LP

These charming Scots finally get the deserved reissue treatment, pulling together their three singles plus unreleased material. Interestingly, the tracks are sequenced in a way that makes the record flow like an LP rather than a culmination of singles. Though not the first and most obvious choice for an album opener, the initial broken keyboard arpeggio on "Electric Heat" should have even the mere dabbler in brutish art transformed into a true addict. Most of the tracks here were recorded at BBC studios and the vocal deliveries have that similar *je ne sais quoi* of other Peel favorites, The Shend from CRAVATS, or a less "addled" Mark E. Smith. One can easily hear why ol' John Peel would want to sink a shilling or two into this fine young quartet. I can only imagine Edinburgh in those fertile years. The days of punk with an imagination. (JK)
(Telephone Explosion)

WAH '77 – "Bet On It" CD

Whiny and adolescent, WAH '77 is like a tiny paper cut that is more annoying then painful. *Bet On It* first reminded me of the OFFSPRING, which is never a good thing, but has the straightforward '80s hardcore riffs of the VANDALS and BATTALION OF SAINTS. Italian punk keeping mediocre US old school pop punk alive. Can we just let it die already? (CR)
(Retro Vox)

WARCRY – "Needle Zero Drone II" EP

The review might be a little late (OK, a few years), but this 2014 slab still crushes. Textbook D-beat hardcore, and I can't think of any North American band who has been doing it better... or doing it for longer. "Zero Zero Zero" is the next "Bullshit Bullshit Fucking Bullshit" and "Drone" is a perfectly executed one riff slog, exactly the shit that B-Sides were made for. Excellent. (WN)
(Black Water)

THE WARDEN – "Cell Bars" EP

There used to be this punk who worked at the 7-11 in the sunset right by where my friend Zach lived and he would always slip a few forties our way when his boss wasn't looking so we could get drunk in the park. He was real cool, like ten years older than us at the time (we musta been fourteen). If that dude was a record, this would be it. Kinda pimply from what I remember, socially awkward, most certainly had a dangly earing, definitely into the NECROS and DIE KRUEZEN, but I don't think stuck around long enough to ever listen to CRAZY SPIRIT. I get a little bit of a NEOS vibe, but the tunes aren't as outwardly wacky. WARDEN's got that provincial Midwest vibe, the sketchy hometown hero, the guy you lose track of but will always be your friend. Lo-fi and angry, just like every relationship you had in high school. For fans of: Red Vines, your dad's tool set, never fully being able to grow a mustache. (MW)
(Lumpy)

WHITNEY HOUSTON'S CRYPT – "Twosome's Threesomes" EP

Caterwauling drenched deep in reverb, guitars slithering and sliding through some fucking boring drumming. It's like shoegazers playing black metal. Vocals sounding like hallmark black metal woman screams but the guitars are meandering and pretty. I kind of dig the riffs, the singer could even possibly be salvaged (but probably not), but damn these drums. Just to twist the knife a little more, there is a goth lounge wank on side-B that I swear lasts like ten minutes. (MM)
(Vacant Valley)

THE WORLD – "Loser/Lullaby" flexi

Coolest Bay Area group with the power to convert an entire disinterested room into wild believers. Watching them play is like riding a time machine back to an era of ESSENTIAL LOGIC, MODETTES and DELTA 5 45s, when punks got consumed by the possibilities of dub and ska and funk, while retaining the taut stripped down sensibilities of the DIY ideal…

Amber is just a Warhol superstar front person, if Ken Loach was the Warhol?! Cuz she's real. Real cool. Her voice makes me wanna start fifty nine bands. Their first 45 was killer, if not quite capturing the majesty of the live experience, and this one despite its ephemeral flexi qualities is another gotta-get-it artifact. "Loser" is the hit, a bombastic snarling skanker for post-punk girls and louche rakes. Andy Human's guitar has a "Guns of Brixton" devastation affect that will make you wanna devolve immediately. The way Elyse and Amber interact as the rhythm section and band vocalists is just so cool, off beat but united in cool and snarl. "Lullaby" is so sick, a slow burn take down of what a girl is, about language and perception over this amazing "Straight to Hell" soundscape with Augustus Pablo melodica and the Alexa and Stanley Sax attack. This isn't a Hellcat records CLASH tribute act I promise, it's like the coolest otherworldly take on things that I love with a million ideas and references plus the tunes to back it all up. Previous groups of this collective are worth checking out too (PANG, PENNY MACHINE both being incredible ensembles) and most of the group are in thirty other great bands (RAYS, ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS, LIFE STINKS). In fact it seems like Alexa is in pretty much every band in Oakland. Maybe she is. This is the coolest, I need a zillion more WORLD records. (LG)
(Play Pinball!)

ZERO – LP

Minneapolis' finest purveyors of Japanese-style hardcore return (surprisingly quickly, given how recently their debut singles emerged) with their first full-length release. They've done a great job of throwing off the taint of writing pure JUDGEMENT-style, diversifying their attack with a mix of melodic parts and backing vocals that expand their palette wonderfully. Yeah, there are still JUDGEMENT moments in the mix, but at times they recall HUMAN ARTS and some moments even touch convincingly on the likes of BASTARD and DEATH SIDE (way to drop in some piano at the tail end of "Zero," a very clever tribute indeed!). The LP is a bit front-loaded in terms of quality, though the B-side redeems itself with the album-closing epic "Life's a Maze." On the whole, this is well-written, and performed with a ton of passion and respect for the style. The beautiful warm recording and slick mastering job contribute tremendously to the success of the record as well. To top it all off, they were graced with some of the best Sugi cover art in years. Very impressive! (AU)
(Anomie / Desolate / Farewell)

ZOOM – "Sweet Desperation" LP

A long-lost solitary single that came out in 1977 by this Toronto outfit that vomited members into the far more notorious VILETONES and DIODES. ZOOM's 45 was the first single to get out of the Toronto scene (recorded in 1976) and both songs are totally indicative of the rest of the unreleased tracks on this LP: high-energy pub-friendly rockers with one foot in the *Pebbles*-'60s-*Bomp* magazine ethos and another in the modern faster '70s punk scene. So, in my personal favorite alternate universe, this record came out on Stiff Records in 1978 and I can get all excited about finding a blue vinyl Belgian pressing in Fresno...or something. Not in this reality. According to the extensive liners, the core members went into a studio after the band ended to get these tracks down with the definite sense of their own posterity central to their intentions, and a it's a good thing because this is one solid motherfucking 1970s rock'n'roll record. Recommended. (RW)
(Ugly Pop)

V/A – "Algo Salvaje Vol. 2" CD

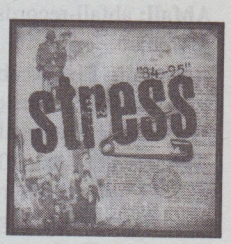
Volume One of this series was my favorite comp of the last ten years. It is so damn good that I was actually excited about getting this CD for review. Volume Two does not disappoint. Twenty-eight tracks of very cool '60s Spanish beat and garage bands. All the tracks are so groovy and when they are sung in Spanish they sound even hipper. Not only does it sound great, but the packaging is awesome. The booklet contains a page on each band with pictures of the records and the story that goes along with it. Plus some extra pictures of the bands. It is also written in Spanish and English. *Algo salvaje* translates to "something wild," and boy is this comp. I love it. (CK)
(Munster)

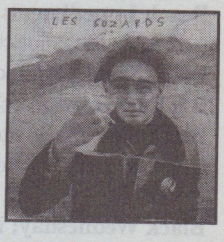
V/A – "Live at the Rock Side 99 and Coco Art and Music Club" LP

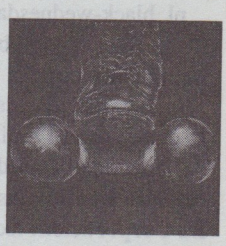
Two songs from each of these Polish bands makes up this compilation: FIRENZE, APORIA, [peru], MARTIM MONITZ, UTRATA SKLAD, and PHOENIX THE DEVOURER. Supposedly it's all live, but the sound quality is great. Most of the bands fall more on the melodic punk or emo side of thing, but the last two bands lie in weirder experimental or alternative rock territories. Not much grabs my attention here. (MA)
(Antena Krzyku / Do It With Friends)

V/A – "No Friends (Maga)zine No. 3" flexi

Third installment of this flexi series. VIOLENCE CREEPS' song is a bit of a departure from their other stuff so far (maybe a preview of things to come?) with this song largely being characterized by a creeping bassline interspersed with bursts of jangly guitar. I like it. SHOCKWAVES offer up a quick mid-tempo garage number with sassy vocals. It's okay, but the vocals are too thin and low in the mix, and the generic Marshall-type guitar tone doesn't work for this style. TV SLIME are a bit more harsh and contribute a straightforward noise rock song that's largely atonal save for some cool guitar squealing. I saw BLEEDING GUMS play a couple of great sets when I was recently in Chicago, and the song here does them justice. Raucous garage rock with a nice guitar tone and very prominent wandering bass that's mixed quite loud but offers a cool dynamic. The bread of this sandwich is the best part, and those bands' stuff is definitely worth seeking out. (DG)
(No Friends)







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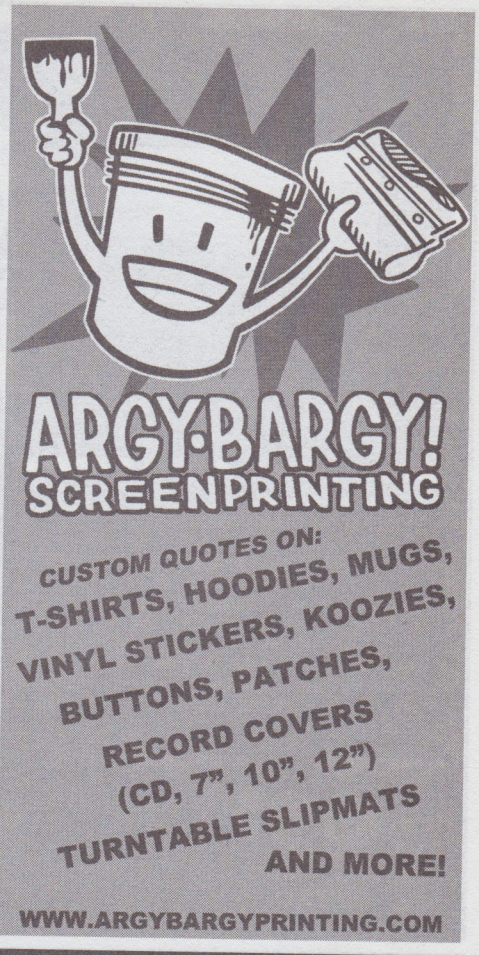
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With four EPs, an LP, and a slew of cassettes and compilations released since their 2010 demo, Boilerman has played over 170 shows across the US and Canada. The band's sophomore full length is 12 new songs using a sonic pallet drawn as much from bands like Leatherface and Articles of Faith as it is contemporaries like Canadian Rifle, Tenement, and Witches with Dicks. The album is rounded out by a faithful cover of The Mice's 1986 "Not Proud Of The USA" and illustrations by Shannon Thompson.

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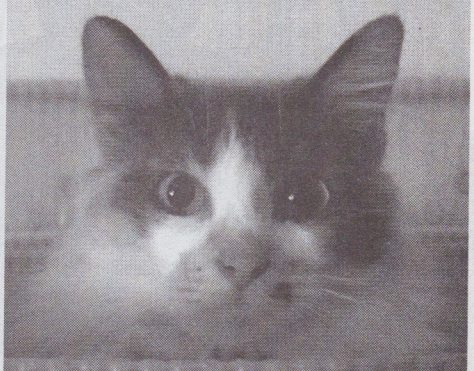

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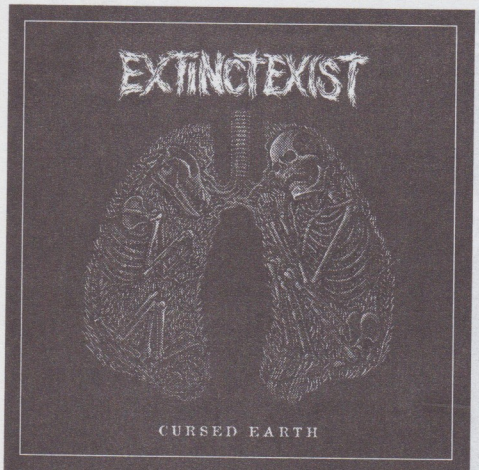

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ANOMALIA – *Ne Näkevät Kaiken* – Fourteen tracks of varied Finnish hardcore punk and one unexpected but welcomed EBBA GRÖN cover. The vocals are burly in nature and sound genuinely angry. Their sound definitely has the unbridled fury of classic Finnish hardcore, but the songwriting is more interesting than your typical DISCHARGE-inspired thrash. Obscure reference: ANOMALIA really reminds me of a late '80s band called AIVOKUOLLEET KAKARAT from the *Waasa EP* compilation. I know, it's sorta ridiculous recalling such obscure comparisons, but if *I* was reading *your* review and you made that comparison, I'd be checking this shit out! 'Cos it's excellent! (Matt) (15-song cassette, lyrics included, anomaliamalmi.bandcamp.com)

ARC FLASH – *Black Market Time Tech* – Psych-garage with punk impacts, but fairly pop and controlled. Dripping wet vocals and a wobbly energetic guitar with a punchy punk rhythm section. They can tend to drag on and when the guitarist breaks out the wah for a quick in-and-out guitar break, they show their underlying jam band tendencies. Honestly they can drift into kind of lame and psychedelic instincts but the full on attack bass is what keeps them pure. Worth a listen. (Michael) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, facebook.com/arcflashmusic)

THE ASOUND – Heavy and down-tuned rock of the marijuana-smoking variety from North Carolina. While I'm not interested in these sounds, these guys are more than capable, and they spend enough time away from sludge to keep me bobbing my head. (Matt) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, tsugurirecords.blogspot.com)

ATROPELLO – Fast bursts of high end and high energy hardcore from Argentina. Several songs clock in under the 60-second mark, and the overall vibe here is short, sharp, to the point, and no bullshit…and way better than most of the shit that passes through my earholes. File under: "if you like fast hardcore, then you need this." (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, atrpellopunx.bandcamp.com)

BAZZ / FRISBEE AND THE RAT PUNKS – Have you heard of BAZZ from Poserton? They've been in these pages before. They've stepped it up a notch since their last tape and seem to have been practicing a lot more in their beer soaked shit pile of a house. Aggressive and fucking catchy 1-2-1-2 pogo punk about getting drunk, puking, getting stooped, and getting drunker. You like WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET? You probably wanna hear BAZZ, idiots. FRISBEE AND THE RAT PUNKS is a band made up of the *actual rats* that live with BAZZ. Yeah…a band made up of rats. I mean, they can only play a couple of strings at a time (small paws) and just beat on the floor for drum sounds, but it's really good. They sing about what they know: beer that got dropped on the floor, hating cats (ACAB), and having a bad rattitude. Get into it, chump. (Greg) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, lifeisposers.bigcartel.com)

BEEF BOYS – *Banana Eyes* – Very clean garage punk with a surfy aftertaste. It's more on the punk end compositionally and the spacey vocals give it a slight weirdness and a heartbeat that comes from the relentless punches that each banger beat pops. The tape ends with a noise soaked wah guitar solo. Punk hooks coming from a weird place reminiscent of TRADITIONAL FOOLS. The attack will bang your head for you. (Michael) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, beefboys.bandcamp.com)

BLEEDING GUMS – *II* – Hells yes, my people. A hyper energetic burst of weirdo garage hardcore fronted by confidence and power. Like modern Midwest freak punk dredged through COWS attitude…good ass raw vibes, crazy good tracks, and a certified ripper on guitar. "Out" is the track you want, but the whole demo is the thing you need. (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, kidawesometapes@gmail.com, bleedinggumsrnr.bandcamp.com)

BODY PRESSURE – Wow. This tape includes six relentless, political, feminist hardcore tracks. The singer is angry in a way that needs to be expressed deliberately, not frantically. Is there such a thing as "mid-tempo hardcore?" To be fair, the tempo does pick up a lot on the track "Body Pressure," and the final track, "Fuck the System." The recording is heavy as fuck, and the lyrics are unapologetically threatening. It sounds a little bit like WEIRD TV but not as weird and more hardcore. There's something going on here besides the same old boring hardcore chord progressions—dare I say a darkwave influence? Whatever it is, it works. There is only music on one side of the tape which sucks because I want to play it on repeat. Also, watch out for the glitter. (Heather) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, bodypressure.bandcamp.com)

BUM OUT – *Pain Don't Hurt* – Eight very '90s sounding melancholic yet rocking tunes that recall JAWBREAKER. It's all very longing and epic and there are feelings. Not mine, but maybe yours! (Sean) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, bumout.bandcamp.com, PO Box 4491 Austin, TX 78765)

BUSINESS MODELS – *Room* – Long awaited release of recordings from these Philly emo heads. Featuring members of ALGERNON CADWALLADER, APE UP!, and MAN WITHOUT PLAN, the sound doesn't stray too far from what you'd expect, however what they do offer is a completely energetic, adept, and very punk take on the genre. The guitar playing is rhythmically and melodically complex but not in an annoying math rock way. Everything going on serves the songs perfectly. Besides members' past bands, it might remind you of GET UP KIDS, BRAID, or SAVES THE DAY. (Sean) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, businessmodels.bandcamp.com, 139 Huber Ave, Holbrook, NY 11741)

BUTCHER BOYS – Fast as fuck hardcore with no pose. Sounds like it was recorded in outer space. Abduct me. Shoot me in the face with a laser. There's *one* mosh part on this whole thing and it just blew up the White House. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, cufranco402@aol.com, butcherboys.bandcamp.com, 1225 Valinda Ave, West Covina, CA 91790)

CASUAL SECT – *The Hidden Persuaders* – London fuzz punkers CASUAL SECT blast out quick, weird bursts of catchy, cathartic, experimental noise-gunk that is bookended by samples and pitch-shifted transmissions from space. Influences float around in an otherworldly muck of the Subgenius, David Icke, the Hadron collider and…uh….getting fat. Sometimes, it's

out there in a way that feels really fucked up (in a good way) and other times it just sounds like a '90s SONIC YOUTH chorus. (Greg) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, box-records.com)

THE DADDYO'S – *It's a Tough World For a Lonely Girl / Smother Your Brother* – Two LPs on one cassette: *Tough World* is upbeat beach pop, while *Smother...* is more melancholy with the dreaminess of heartbreaking indie pop featuring washes of breathy vocals. The A-side is the fun day at the beach with your friends and the B-side is the exhausted loneliness of coming home to your dark room. Songs about cheese pizza and boys with accents make it light-hearted, but the 'verbed vocals give it a haunting feeling, as if reminiscent of innocence now gone. Songs like "Ceiling Fan" sonically and lyrically cover the slow emptiness of depression, being knocked on your back with only the ceiling fan making any movement in your room. This will either be exactly what you'll need to get over whatever's bringing you down or it'll be the thing that tips you over the edge of having to finally acknowledge it. (Michael) (22-song cassette, lyrics not included, thedaddyos.bandcamp.com)

DAUDYFLIN – Wild Icelandic pogo that treads on the wreckage of LYDIA LUNCH, BLAZING EYE, LIFE CHAIN, and PINK TURDS IN SPACE. Ruthless vocal chord tear-up. Lo-fi pogo attack with swanky underlying guitar solos. Pretty barbaric and diminutive. Of the ilk, and predictable, but overall I image this band brings a severely ill live show. (Jason) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, pbppunk.com)

DIORETIX – I love hearing a new San Francisco hardcore band because *we are the punks* and we live here. DIORETIX is comprised of some dudes I always see in the neighborhood and they play down-tuned hardcore in the vein of TALK IS POISON and TRAGEDY. The lyrics deal in utter hopelessness…like, you're gonna fuckin' die, so why even try in the first place? Just when you think it's no-slow-all-go, they bring it down to a heavy, earth melting sludge mosh. The kinda shit you wanna listen to while smashing that last beer can against your head as you jump out the window. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, dioretix.bandcamp.com)

DJ B.O. – This is a cool concept. B.O. (a DUMPER) collaborated with other folks from the St. Louis punk scene who might not get as much of the…err…exposure that other punks receive. The tape compiles a lot of different voices to create an urgent snapshot of possibility. Seven out of the ten players on this tape have never been in a band before, but you'd never know it because every song simply *destroys*. Deep synth, wild punk, chaotic destruction, shit-ass feedback, reverb for days. Everything on this tape is nothing less than compelling. Get it. (Greg) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, spottedrace.bigcartel.com)

FAUX CULTS – *Caviar* – A cute name that makes you think, but with a fun loving sound that makes you forget. Ramblin' surf-colored garage rock that can range from banger to ballad but is always nice and steady. They never really explode into anything faster than a comfortable discernible pace, so you'll be ready and aware for whatever speed that they take you to. Fun and pop, like all the other bands that sound like them. (Michael) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, thefauxcults.bandcamp.com)

FCKR – *Schwiene* – My reviews are so often contradictory. One minute I'm mumbling about the boring repetition of some self-perceived goth punk resurgence, and then before you can say "hypocrite" I'm blabbing about how some band from Texas is the best '80s goth punk rehash ever. The point is, however, that if you are going to ape a thing, then you not only have to do it right, but you have to make it your own. Enter FCKR, who dropped what is perhaps the coolest demo of 2016 in your collective laps with *Schweine*. A sharp, smart, jerky Deutschpunk / No Wave hybrid, each one of the seven tracks on this tape is cool enough to warrant the mailorder fees, and together they are simply astounding. Every single thing you (secretly) dig about the infectious groove of more mainstream indie rock tracks stripped to their (very, very punk) roots and presented as they should be. These are the kind of tapes that people (like me) use non-descriptive descriptors like "angular" and "modern post-punk" to describe…but I'll just tell you that "Gefahrengebiet" is absolutely the coolest banger I have heard all month. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, lofilolife@gmail.com, fckr.bandcamp.com)

FOLKICIDE – *Legion Lesions* – The cover is a big DANZIG looking painting with a squid stabbing a naked man, an X-ray of a human head, and other brutal underlying sexual images, none of which complement FOLKICIDE at all. FOLKICIDE is just a man and a guitar and it sounds like intimate rough bedroom demos of a LOU REED inspired drone folk solo project. The guitar is much louder than the vocals, so they kind of take a back seat and make the lyrics indiscernible, so who knows if he's a clever songwriter or not. Fine music to chill out to, and sounds like a teaser for a real record that's on its way. (Michael) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, folkicide.bandcamp.com)

THE FOUL ENGLISH – High energy adult punk rock'n'roll led by a screaming wall of guitars. JOHNNY THUNDERS meets ROSE TATTOO with plenty of partying in the mix. (Robert) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thefoulenglish.com)

GENEX – *Human Rites* – Ough!!! Pure pogo bang from start to finish…riffs for days and a gloriously brooding delivery. I mean, sure they've listened to S.H.I.T. a few times, but this Canadian blitzkrieg stands strong on its own. What happens when you take the good things and do them prop? You get The Good Shit. And this is *the* shit that makes me want to break shit. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, genexbandcamp.bandcamp.com)

GIRTH CONTROL – This band says it themselves: "We started this band almost a year ago as a joke." But somehow they're still at it. The line between irony and sincerity seems to be more blurred now than ever. Whether it's a "joke" or not seems increasingly irrelevant. Maybe it's just a way for people to save face while allowing themselves to freely enjoy stuff that's been determined to be officially "uncool" by the punk hipster elite. Maybe the whole thing is a spontaneous, decentralized resistance to the existence of "hipness" in punk. Or maybe celebrating uncoolness is just another way to show how edgy and elite you are. Anyway, this band delivers all the punk-ska nostalgia of AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY or SUICIDE MACHINES, with non-ska pop punk interludes that call to mind the scuzzy posi-ness of CRIMPSHRINE or LATTERMAN or any fast political pop punk band composed of 20-year-olds taking themselves really, really seriously. Impressive sound quality for a live recording too! (Heather) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, girthcontrol.bandcamp.com)

GRINDMOTHER – *Age Of Destruction* – I mean, you have the internet, right? On the one hand, this could be dismissed as a novelty taken too far, but...the grind is sick and the vokills are on point. Colossal sounding guitar/drum metallic grindcore with one of the members' mom handling vocal duties…almost a shame that people will mostly (only?) know them for the schtick, because the jams are on point. (Robert) (10-song CD-R, lyrics included, thegrindmother.com)

HISS – Brutal thrashy hardcore with lots of echo on the vocals and some cool noisy guitar effects. It's at the fast end of fast and the lyrics and maniacal screams are about death and losing your mind. Side two switches gears with a slower song/intro that builds up in to noisy guitar feedback before launching back into the mayhem. Sounds like the unlikely love child of

the CRAMPS and NEGATIVE APPROACH. (Heather) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, mtrebin6@gmail.com, deathjamrecords.com)

INDIGNARI – Four insanely burly bursts of Canadian hardcore. Bombastic presentation perfectly wedged in between classic USHC and UK street punk. Fists clenched tighter than the latter, more swing than the former. "High Horse" is a brain melting shredder, but all of this shit is just pure gold, kids. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, indignarirawpunk@gmail.com, indignari.bandcamp.com)

INGRATE – It does not seem overly intentional but this band is channeling the atmosphere of degenerate, desperate, angry, and just a little bit unnervingly silly sound of early '80s LA punk. They're from McAllen, Texas, which kind of looks like LA In the '80s. I've never been there, and this opinion is based on photos from the internet, so maybe I'm totally wrong here. But maybe the reason they're convincingly pulling off this style is because they're not faking it. Palm trees, sprawl, shopping, perfectly white teeth. Reminds me of the GERMS' more coherent tracks. The recording is pretty dirty, and the guitar is jangly and up front, which probably also has to do with why it sounds like legit '80s punk. No cool-guy bullshit here, this band is gross (in a good way). (Heather) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, ingratetx.bandcamp.com)

KVÖL – *Demo* – Ethereal death rock for fans of SISTERS, VAMPIRE STATE BUILDING, SHE PASSED AWAY. Slow space-launch keyboards are the canary in this coalmine of psychological looping samples and Twelfth House vocals. This sounds like something bad is going to happen, but it feels so good. What a warm little glimmer of despair from Iceland to crash into. (Jason) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, pbppunk.com)

LARS – LARS is not one guy, but an unrelentingly vicious full punk band from St. Louis. I mean you're probably gonna get it because its half DUMPERS, but you should be getting it because it's fully awesome. They are more in line with classic hardcore or their peers in RÜZ and AMERICAN HATE than Midwestern slime punk. Completely annihilating. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, spottedrace.bigcartel.com)

LAUGHTER – Borderline inept and sloppy-ass punk (in a good way) with an engagingly muddy recording. I was happy to hear that the mutant singing for them threw in a few laughs here and there (one of my favorite moves a punk singer can make). Kind of in the Midwest slime-punk vibe. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, imabigcitybaby@gmail.com)

LEMONADE – Gritty and angry as fuck, mostly fast but also has some moments where it finds its way into a still-tough but almost '60s psychedelic groove. Most of punk music is aggressive, and over time it seems that punk has forgotten why it's angry or even begun to believe that anger and aggression are inherently self-justified. Not that we always need to explain ourselves, but aggression for its own sake on repeat is boring or worse. This band reminds us that when hardcore has something visceral and real from personal experience and communal trauma to be angry about, there is no mistaking it for another boring aggressive band. You can hear them hiding in dark corners with a long knife ready to stab a rapist. If you have a pulse, this will probably get you going. (Heather) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, mnlemondade@gmail.com)

LIFE AS ONE – Graffiti style band name on the cover. Song titles like "Hard Stance" and "United of the World." Throw down mosh parts coupled with Oi!-speed verses and a gravel-garbled Cookie Monster singer. The lyrics contain some GORILLA BISCUITS-style righteousness (fully backed). Lots of energy and it sounds like a sweaty pit of shirtless men waiting to happen. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, imabigcitybaby@gmail.com)

LONG GONE – *Six Songs* – Twangy country-influenced indie rock featuring Shannon of Nervous Nelly Records fame. The intro of the second song reminds me of DEFTONES, and I'm into it. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, nervous.nelly.records@gmail.com, 53 Brentwood St, Boston, MA 02134)

MALA LECHE – Ah shit, this rules! I'm pretty sure that this one is members of LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS and WILD CHILD and it kills. They play manic 4/4 driven punk with fuzzy guitars and a singer who sounds like a truly unhinged freak out of the cage! Like imagine what Darby Crash might've been like if he just kept doing uppers all the time and sang in Spanish. Put that through a delay/reverb filter, set it in a punk house in 2016, lay a synth on top of it and smear it with shit. Pure perfection. Kill a fucking cop. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, malaleche69.bandcamp.com)

MEMORY HOLE – This is the second demo from these Winnipeg fuckers, shitting out ugly, desperate punk that delves into hardcore territory here and there. Noisy, meandering guitar lines that dip their toes into Ginn territory (only briefly) set this apart from your standard basement punk. Good shit. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, memoryhole2.bandcamp.com, 204-793-2723)

THE MINOTAURS – *Secret Deals* – This came with the suggested description "psychedelic muscular garage." I agree it's totally psychedelic garage, but not totally sure what's muscular about it. It's not particularly tough or unusually dumb. Muscular like a bulldog? Muscular like as in masculine? Like do these guys have necks? Anyway, this band definitely incorporates a lot of creativity, production, and attention to songwriting on top of what you might expect from garage rock, and it achieves a heavy groove beyond the superficial twisting and shouting you get from the regular '00s garage crowd. A couple of the tracks remind me of the PHARMACY's first full length release, *B.F.F.* The tracks go in a lot of different directions, sometimes playing with glam, sometimes more aggressive, sometimes tripped-out and bluesy. It gets weird, but still nothing your mom would flush down the toilet. (Heather) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, theminotaurs.bandcamp.com)

GREG MURRAY – GREG MURRAY is a dude from Pittsburgh who got his friend Mikey to help him out on this tape. They play REPLACEMENTS style indie punk that sometimes dips toward alt-country for brief moments. More rock than punk and a few painfully out of tune vocal moments that are hard to ignore. Heart on sleeve-style lyrics. (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, gregmurraypgh.bandcamp.com)

1919 – *Death Note* – Once upon a time there was this band from the UK called 1919 that sounded a lot like and were contemporaries of KILLING JOKE. They're back with a new EP and a new album in the works, and it actually sounds really good. Though I'm not familiar with all of their material outside of a couple singles, they come off more goth here. The swirl of the guitar effects are at full tilt, and the vocals are dramatic in the style of Peter Murphy. Folks interested in UK DECAY or the aforementioned artists will definitely want to start paying attention to this band again. (Matt) (4-song CD-R, lyrics included, 1919official.bandcamp.com)

NOUN VERB ADJECTIVE – *Boys in the Sand EP (deluxe)* – Big magnificent beach pop / indie rock with jangly guitars, comforting percussion, lounge organ playing baroque compositions, and dual vocals all clearly influenced by the VELVET UNDERGROUND. So think a framed tapestry of theatrical music that drones into a lo-fi day dream. The weirdness that they attempt is washy and out of focus, lying on top of a structured bed of melody, like seeing the pebbles beneath the stream. Not bad. (Michael) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, nounverbadjective.bandcamp.com)

DEMOS

NUMBSKULL ACTION – *Action & Reaction* – Garage punk from Woking, England. The raw 4-track recording suits their sound well, and the rhythms are sharp and swaggering. The vocal lines are commanding in theory, but the vocal quality lacks a bit. Could just be the distortion masking potential tones. None of the tracks stand out as "hits" to me, but the material is consistently strong. (Matt) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, numbskullaction.bandcamp.com)

OLL BREDS – *Charm* – Rarely has soulful guitar/drum rock'n'roll sounded this good to my ears, but these wayfaring burners have got me hooked. Perfect warble in the vocals, sounds pushed just enough into the red to add some grit, and the pace doesn't let up…ever. It's simple, and it simply creams. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, jacobmilstein.com, 2433 Smoking Oak Rd, Norman, OK 73072)

ÖNKIIRTÁS – Burly Hungarian hardcore. Pretty over the top with song construction, by the time the final track "Tömeg" drops I mostly just want to go back and hear the shit that I missed. Start/stop fast/slow and riffs all over the place, but they never lose intensity or my interest. The tape is a promo for a forthcoming EP, one that I recommend. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, dvoracsko@yahoo.com, mindig.otthon.punk.discs@gmail.com)

OUTSKIRTS – I thought the room would be too crowded, and I didn't think I would get to the show in time to see OUTSKIRTS, so I skipped the after show on April 16, 2016. I will remember that date every time I listen to this demo, and I will regret my decision. Fierce and relentless hardcore from NYC with the front woman from DEATH FIRST taking shit to the next level and positively owning a tape that would be killer even if the vocals were "meh"… but the vocals are so fukkn good, punks. The thing makes me clench my fists so hard that it's hard to type. This is what I want. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, outskirtsnyc.bandcamp.com)

PUDGE – *Bad Land* – Twenty mostly very short hardcore ragers intermixed with a refreshing variety of weird riffs inspired by an eclectic mix of non-punk genres. The fast parts are punchy and mosh-worthy, kept fresh with almost jangly or twangy guitar leads. Some of the tracks approach funkiness in the vein of MINUTEMEN or BIG BOYS. This band seems like it is probably on the cutting edge of something. I hope this is where hardcore punk is heading, because it rules. (Heather) (20-song CD-R, lyrics not included, pudgenola.bandcamp.com)

ROHT – *Demo* – Icelandic harsh break that reminds me of Einar Örn Benediktsson from SUGARCUBES spilling cereal all over the place. I mean, who gives a shit. This is bizarre and carnivalistic with weird Fury Road militant guitar placements. Fronts too far, too. Some really danceable stuff on here. Do you live in a not-quite-metro, suburbanite-gentrifying shithole? Having a house party? Get your ROHT on hard. (Jason) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, roht.bandcamp.com)

SCUMRAID – *USA West Coast Tour 2016* – I saw South Korea's SCUMRAID on this tour and their guitarist punched himself in the head *hard* four times before they even played a note. That's what this tape feels like. Pure noize-not-music insanity played fast as fuck and completely on the edge of falling apart at all times. The bass and drums hold each song down while the guitar is just a fucking wall of screeching, unrelenting chaos. I could probably cite some bands but what's the fucking point? This is stellar. Unfuckwithable. If this is not in your life, I truly don't know what you're doing here. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, darkraidslabel.storeenvy.com)

SPUTTER – Ripping snotty riffs, blistering no bullshit '80s USHC delivery, panicked vocals, and a song about morphing into dinosaurs to kill cops. Cool concept, cool tape. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com)

TEENAGE SEX – Most people who hear this band name usually get grossed out, but I just think of GEN X's "Kiss Me Deadly," which is where they got the name. These people are far from their teenage years and live in the Bay Area. They play straightforward punk with a melody that is in the vein of mid-period REPLACEMENTS and pre-major label LEMONHEADS. Solid 4/4 drumming and catchy broken-hearted lyrics. Good shit. (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, teenage-sex.bandcamp.com)

WEIRD SCIENCE – *After Party* – Catchy, dirty, and full of rock'n'roll attitude from Athens, Ohio. It has all the heart and energy of a punk record and all the technical ability and songwriting of more mainstream rockers. Just because you're good doesn't mean it has to suck. It seems like they're almost entering the rock'n'roll punk territory of bands like the RIPOFFS or the CARBONAS, but they're too talented to play music that dumb. Some of the tracks channel the region rock sensibilities of bands like FUTURE VIRGINS or CARRIE NATIONS, only with a pretty much constant stream of wailing rock'n'roll guitar lead. (Heather) (?-song cassette, lyrics not included, PO Box 29, Athens, OH 45701)

WHIP – I could go for an obvious reference point for this Winnipeg band and say NEO BOYS (they cover "Give Me the Message"), but they also have more modern tones. WHIP's sound is somehow simultaneously shaky and confident…like, the members are not fully 100% on musicianship but they don't give a fuck what you think and it sounds awesome. They have lyrics about feeling out of place, out of your mind, and feeling trapped by this society. I'd love to see this band at a show with CHROMA, EFIALTIS, and FRAU. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, whipwhipwhip.bandcamp.com)

WHITE COLLAR CRIME – *Wars Undeclared* – Is there such a thing as a WORLD / INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY collaboration with THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS? Theatrical weirdo music, intellectually advanced, and void of musical teeth…should have been born in 1982 San Francisco. (Robert) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, whitecollarcrime@kennedycamden.com)

THE WRONG – *Technology* – Spastic bursts of shrill and erratic hardcore rarely sound this good. There are moments that sound like a blast from some unknown late '70s raucous KBD, and then there are moments that sound like some modern Midwest mutants going for it and going hard. High end, high energy. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Girls Radio Offensive Vol II* – This tape is a compilation of Australian bands all featuring female musicians and is "a fundraiser for the Mapuche-Aboriginal Struggles for Indigenous Land (MASIL) exchange project." It comes with an accompanying zine explaining more about those struggles and ways to help support the Mapuche (indigenous people of Chile & Argentina) and First Nations People in Australia. Ani and Britt of the eponymous radio show have curated 25 amazing bands, including grinders DIPLOID, the electro-goth MOLLUSC, post-punkers INFINITE VOID, queer-core superstars GLORYHOLE, the psych-doom THORAX, and hardcore heavy hitters CANINE. Please take a moment to visit the following links to learn more and listen to or order the tape and support such an important cause! (Sean) (25-song cassette, lyrics included, girlsradiooffensive@riseup.net, girlsradiooffensive.bandcamp.com, girlsradiooffensive.wordpress.com, foeausmapuche.wordpress.com, PO Box 2195, Footscray VIC 3011, AUSTRALIA)

ZINES

Send zines for review to:
Maximum Rocknroll
PO Box 460760
San Francisco, CA 94146

Reviewers:
(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(BW) Brendan Wells
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(JB) Julia Booz
(JD) Justin Davisson
(JM) Jeff Mason
(KS) Kenn Soto
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix
(OG) Oscar Gutierrez

ARTCORE #35: THIRTY YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE PART TWO
£6 / 34 pgs
This issue solely consists of select, well-preserved, reprinted band interviews from *Artcore* 1986–1990. Personal highlights are those with Rites of Spring, COC, Instigators, and Inbred (a band I've never heard, but want to check out now). Interviews with members of bands such as the Freeze, Adrenalin OD, Maggot Sandwich, and Urgent Fury are also present and worthwhile at the very least as historical curiosities. I absolutely love these cut-and-paste layouts, though a little more than halfway through a word processor comes into the picture and the result is a ridiculous flowery font that makes the words punishing to read. This zine also comes with the new Violent Arrest 7", also reviewed in this issue. Congratulations on 30 years! (DG)
artcorefanzine.co.uk

HOW TO BREAK UP WITH A FRIEND
20 pgs
A transparently topical doodle journal of what it's like to break up with a toxic friend. First Toni drew all the drawings then scanned them into a computer and then printed them. The simple pen drawings/text all have sharp, large pixels. There are some brief form-like interviews with slightly anonymous people about friend breakups and a pretty great text message and burner phone snake game collage to fill out the bleaker content. (EC)
tonipecchiaart.com

HOW DOES THE INTERNET
$15 / 53 pgs
As an internet hater and user, I don't know how I feel about this zine. Crowdfunded by over 200 people and still costing fifteen bucks (!!!), this little read basically discusses a condensed history of known types of long distance communication. There are two really good knock-knock jokes, and it very briefly even points out the kind of shitty communication that cat-calling is, but as far as a projected interest by the punk community, I don□t see it. Maybe you and your significant other who have avoided computers for a decade will be sat down and gifted this by your six-year-old kid. Beyoncé is mentioned a few times. (DZ)
bubblesort-zines.myshopify.com

MINOR LEAGUES #1
$3 / 98 pgs
Minor Leagues is a sketch zine with sparse illustrations accompanied by occasional short story glimpses into the mind of the artist. There is a sadness, a longing to the art, and the stories that seem to mainly be about missed opportunities or feeling lost in a moment, like being sad that you know it will be over soon. The tone is slightly distracted and guided by wanting to catalogue the instant before it disappears. The drawings are very simple strokes, an unfinished triangle to represent a bird, harsh scribbles to impart a rainstorm. They are quaint and satisfying. The stretch about taking a walk follows two figures that traverse a long distance and ends in a garden where they start a trashcan fire. It's beautiful in its universality. The longest piece is a childhood memory of a funeral that the writer remembers not understanding and ends with a snowball fight with his brother that is of course drawn with light lines and flying circles. I recommend this for poetry and comic fans. (JB)
smoo.bigcartel.com

NO FRIENDS #3
$6.50 / 116 pgs
No friends? Nonsense. It seems like there are lots of friends working together here to put out the third issue of this thing. Well, maybe they aren't all friends, but regardless, a group of human beings (with former *MRR* person Ray Martinez at the fore) managed to join forces to put together a good, hefty magazine. There□s a lot of stuff here, covering punk/hardcore/etc from coast to coast and beyond. You got your interviews, which include Cory Von Bohlen of Halo of Flies Records, London band Shopping, Iceland□s Börn, and a bunch of others (my favorite is the madlibs interview with Violence Creeps). You□ve got a scene report about the Northern Isolation Fest in Duluth, MN, and a piece about skating in North Korea which seems to, at one point, make a friendly comparison between DIY and the Juche philosophy held forth by the Kim Dynasty. (Read: Totalitarian regimes and their state sponsored propaganda are *not punk.*) The whole thing is rounded out with a bunch of reviews and columns, including a touching one by Ray Martinez about the death of his friend Tim Beaty. *No Friends* has good layout style and art and sure, it looks a lot like *Maximum*

Rocknroll, but that's fine, who cares. Besides, you love *Maximum Rocknroll* (which you probably found next to the toilet) and so you'll also enjoy *No Friends*. I know I did. (KS)
PO Box 12343 Chicago, IL 60612 / nofriendszine.com

NOT FOR EVERYONE #2
$3 / 30 pgs
"I hate everyone that I know and I think that all music is garbage except for Negative Approach and Inmates." This is like if the first couple issues of *Cretins of Distortion* were about USHC and skateboarding, which means its got the vibes of an obsessive teenager cutting and pasting the zine together on the floor of their bedroom. The Bill Danforth interview is great—not a classic interview reprint like I expected, but a brand new interview about the early days of pro skating and the first wave of Detroit hardcore. We also get reviews of punk zines, skate zines, music reviews, fan art collage, and an interview with Winnipeg's Genex. This zine is from Portland, so there's a review section just for current Portland releases. Portland bands and skating (more of both, please!) make this a little more unique to me than your average HC fanzine. There's a good amount of content packed in here, so it's worth your dollars. (BW)
1130 SE Ash St, Portland, OR 97214 / snukytate@gmail.com

NOT LIKE YOU #6
$4 / 38 pgs
Not Like You is a hardcore fanzine out of Albuquerque, NM, that is part of the record label of the same name. There's a lot of love of the music and the community here, but the zine itself is a little lackluster. The photos vary from pretty good to grainy and the general layout is a little too "printed off the computer" for my aesthetics. Content-wise, there are lots of generic reviews, a gossip column, a kind of off-putting but well intentioned poem on the back, a few touching mentions of friends now passed on, and many interviews. Even though I'm not a "thrasher" of the four-wheeled "decks," I like the inclusion of interviews with skaters next to the ones with musicians Eddie Leeway, Brian Gorsegner (Nightbirds), and—most notably—Sam McBride (aka Sammytown) of Fang (yes, they talk about the murder of Dixie Lee Carney, but only briefly and not in great depth). There's also an interview with Freddy Alva, who along with Chaka Malik, put out the New Breed Tape Compilation of NYHC bands in the late 1980s. The whole zine was nothing to get me moshing but if you love '80s and '90s hardcore and skating, you'll probably find something to grind on in this (I think grinding is a skating term). (KS)
102 Richmond Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 / notlikeyourecords.com

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6-26 NYC - Otto's Shrunken Head
7-02 Oakland CA - The Night Light w/Gash
7-09 Monterey CA - Planet Gemini

Dick and Jane
6-25 Oakland CA - The Stork Club w/THE NERV
7-9 San Francisco CA - Slim's w/Plan 9
8-27 San Francisco CA - El Rio w/VKTMS
9-13 Pacifica CA - Winters Tavern w/The Vibrators
10-28 Crockett CA - Toot's w/James McCartney

Erin Cookman
7-30 Fort Collins CO - Avogadro's Number

Screaming Bloody Marys
6-16 Sacramento CA - Blue Lamp w/Buck-O-Nine
8-27 San Francisco CA - El Rio w/VKTMS
9-11 Salinas CA - Fox Theater w/The Vibrators
9-15 Crockett CA - Toot's w/The Vibrators

THE NERV
6-25 Oakland CA - The Stork Club w/Dick and Jane
7-21 Ventura CA - The Garage
7-22 Lancaster CA - The Britisher
7-23 Anaheim CA - The Doll Hut

Contact: dielaughingrecords.com
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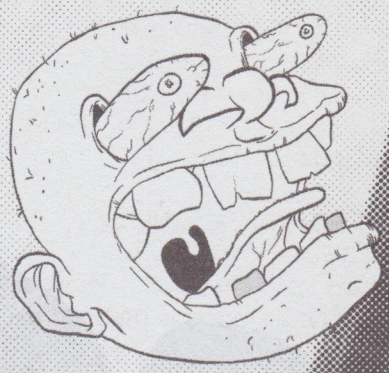

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